



IN THE GREAT APACHE FOREST

The Story of
A Lone Boy Scout

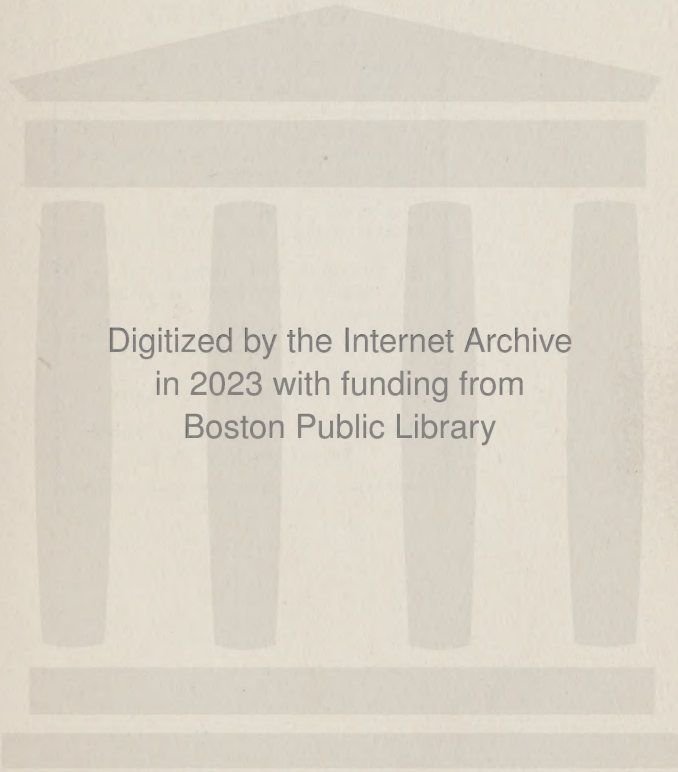
JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

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By J. W. Schultz

RISEING WOLF, THE WHITE BLACK-
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With illustrations.

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Chief Story. Illustrated.

BIRD WOMAN. Illustrated.

THE GOLD CACHE. Illustrated.

APAUK, CALLER OF BUFFALO. Illus-
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ON THE WARPATH. Illustrated.

THE QUEST OF THE FISH-DOG SKIN.
Illustrated.

SINOPAH, THE INDIAN BOY. Illustrated.
WITH THE INDIANS IN THE ROCKIES.

Illustrated.

MY LIFE AS AN INDIAN. Illustrated.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

In the Great Apache Forest

The Story of a Lone Boy Scout



SAW THE INDIAN STOP SHORT, RAISE HIS BOW AND LET FLY
AT THE BEAR (*page 156*)

IN THE GREAT APACHE FOREST

The Story of a Lone Boy Scout

BY
JAMES WILLARD SCHULTZ

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCING THE HERO	I
I. ALONE ON MOUNT THOMAS	10
II. THE MOUNTAIN CAVE	25
III. THE FIREBUGS AT WORK	47
IV. HUNTING THE DESERTER	68
V. THE PEOPLE-OF-PEACE	89
VI. THE WRONGS OF THE HOPIS	111
VII. THE OLD MEN IN RAIN GOD'S CAVE	134
VIII. THE DEATH OF OLD DOUBLE KILLER	154
IX. THE BEAR SKIN IS STOLEN	175
X. CATCHING THE FIREBUGS	197

ILLUSTRATIONS

SAW THE INDIAN STOP SHORT, RAISE HIS BOW AND LET
FLY AT THE BEAR *Frontispiece*

HE WAS TURNING OVER ROCKS AND LICKING THE EX-
POSED UNDER SURFACES 40

FOUND OUR WAY BLOCKED BY A LARGE, THREE-COR-
NERED SLAB OF ROCK 86

I TOOK A CAREFUL SIGHT AT ONE OF THE BIG BUCKS 200

Drawn by HAROLD CUE

IN THE GREAT APACHE FOREST



INTRODUCING THE HERO

THIS is to be George Crosby's — the Lone Boy Scout's — own story. But before I set it down, as he told it evening after evening before the big fireplace in my shooting lodge, some explanations are necessary.¹

George Crosby was born and has lived all of his seventeen years, in Greer, a settlement of a half-dozen pioneer families located on the Little Colorado River, in the White Mountains, Arizona, and 108 miles south of the nearest railway, the Santa Fé, at Holbrook. Here is a high country; the altitude of Greer is 8500 feet, and south of it there is a steady rise for eleven miles to the summit of the

¹ I have, of course, in many instances changed the narrator's wording, but it is his story, all the same.

In the Great Apache Forest

range, Mount Thomas, 11,460 feet. And here, covering both slopes of the White Mountains, is the largest virgin forest that we have outside of Alaska, the Apache National Forest. It is about a hundred miles wide, and more than that in length, and contains millions of feet of centuries-old Douglas fir, white pine, and spruce. But it is an open forest — one can ride at will through most of it, and it is interspersed with many parks of open grassland of varying extent. On its southern slope it adjoins the reservation of the White Mountain Apaches, who are still carefully watched by several companies of United States Cavalry, stationed at Fort Apache. Because it is so remote from the railroads, the great forest still harbors an abundance of game animals and birds, and its cold, pure streams are full of trout. Here the sportsman can still find grizzly bears, some of them of great size. There are black bears, also, and mule deer and Mexican whitetail deer, and of wild turkeys and blue grouse great numbers. Cougars, wolves, coyotes, and lesser prowlers of the night are quite numerous,

Introducing the Hero

and in most of the streams the beavers are ever at work upon their dams and lodges.

The settlers of Greer are a hardy people. Born and reared at this great altitude, they are men and women and children of more than the average height, and of tremendous lung expansion. Theirs is one continuous struggle with Nature for the necessities of life, for here, in the heart of Arizona, they are actually in a sub-Arctic climate. Summer frosts — even in August — sometimes kill their fields of oats, and in the deep snows of the winters some of their cattle frequently perish. But they do their best, these mountain people. Though their crops fail and their live-stock die, they “carry on” with hopeful hearts. And remote from civilization though they are — some of them have never seen a railroad — they are surprisingly well informed of world activities. For they have a tri-weekly mail service and subscribe for all the best magazines and several daily papers, and thoroughly read them. They are all patriotic: when the war broke out their sons did not wait to be drafted; they at

In the Great Apache Forest

once enlisted, and in due time faced the Huns in France. How the women and girls then worked for the Red Cross, and the men for Liberty Bonds! From Greer Post-Office went hundreds of sweaters and pairs of well-knit stockings, and every bond allotment of the settlement was largely over-subscribed!

It was then, at the opening of the war, that George Crosby considered what he could do for the good cause. At first he used all his spare time doing chores for those whose sons had enlisted. But that was not exactly what he wanted to do; it was n't big enough. If he only had some authority, there was much that he could do. He had long wanted to be a member of the Boy Scouts; nothing about them in the magazines and newspapers that came to his home ever escaped his eye. And now he read of the great work they were doing toward the winning of the war, and determined that he must join the organization. But how could he do it? There could be no company of Scouts formed in Greer; he was the only boy there save two or three little

Introducing the Hero

toddlers. For days he brooded over the question, and then, without a word about it to his mother and stepfather, he one evening wrote the following touching appeal to me — the one man of the great outside world whom he knew, in far-away Los Angeles:

DEAR FRIEND:

I call you friend because I know you are my friend. Your shooting lodge looks very lonesome these days, the windows all shuttered and no smoke coming out of the big chimney. We all wish that you may soon come back to it. You should come right away, for only day before yesterday, when I was hunting for some of our horses a couple of miles up the river, I saw the fresh tracks of a big grizzly bear, and I know that you want another one. Some big gobblers are using the spring just up the slope from your place.

Uncle Cleve Wiltbank has gone to the war, and so have Mark Hawes, Henry Butler, and Forest Ranger Billingslea, and we sure miss them. I am

In the Great Apache Forest

just mad because I am not old enough to go, too. But if I can only join the Boy Scouts I may be able to help, some. Anyhow, I could then trail about after some strange men who have lately come into these mountains, and seem not to want to meet any of us. We never get more than a glimpse of them. We don't even know where they are camped. I wish that you would get me into the Boy Scouts. I am sure that you can do it.

Your mountain friend

GEORGE CROSBY

Upon receiving this note, I at once sent it to a Phoenix, Arizona, friend who I knew was interested in the Boy Scouts organization, and the result was that, after the exchange of several letters, George Crosby became a member of a troop of the Phoenix Boy Scouts of America.

Time passed. Came the summer of 1918, and the Supervisor of the Apache National Forest found himself woefully short of men, and the dreaded fire season coming on. The most of his rangers, fire

Introducing the Hero

lookouts, and patrols had gone to the war, and he could not find enough men of the right sort to take their places. When word of this shortage of men reached Greer, the settlers were seriously troubled about it. Said John Butler, George Crosby's step-father: "This is sure bad for us. Fires will be started by the lightning, and by careless travelers, and if there are no lookouts to report them, they will gain such headway that they will burn our whole cattle range. Then we will go broke!"

"Well, I'll be one of the lookouts if the Supervisor will take me on," said George.

"Sure! That is the very thing for you to do—" John began, but the good mother broke in: "No! No! George is too young — too inexperienced to undertake that dangerous, lonely work. Away up on one of those peaks by himself, right where the electric storms center — right among those terrible grizzly bears — strange men prowling about in the forest, bad men, of course, or they would make themselves known to us — no, I do not want my boy to be a fireguard."

In the Great Apache Forest

"But those mysterious men have gone!" George exclaimed. "Roy Hall found their deserted camp. If I let the grizzlies alone, they'll let me alone! And as to the thunderstorms, I know the rules: when they gather, the fireguards must leave the lookout stations and go down to their cabins. Don't you fear for me, mother, I'll be safe enough!"

"Sure he will!" John told her. "And just think, wife, of the service he will be to the country in its time of need! And now that he has become a Boy Scout, something big is expected of him. Well, here is his chance to do the big thing!"

The mother sighed. "I take back my objections," she said. "I should not have said one word against this. If my own young brother can face the Huns in France, then it is but fair that my young son shall face the lesser dangers in this Apache Forest!"

When Forest Supervisor Frederic Winn, in Springerville, received George's letter of application for a position as fireguard during the season, he, too, heaved a big sigh, but it was a sigh of relief. He hurried home from the office to tell Mrs.

Introducing the Hero

Winn that George Crosby was to be a fireguard, and then he called for his big, black horse, and rode the eighteen miles up across the desert and into the forest to Greer, to give George his necessary instructions, and tell him that his salary would be ninety dollars per month.

But there! I have talked enough. With this introduction, I let George tell his story, a story that I found exciting enough. I find, though, that I have omitted to describe his person. Well, in place of it I give you his photograph. Just note how tall and well-built he is for his age — seventeen years — and what a powerful chest he has. That is what one gets by being born and reared at an elevation of 8500 feet!

CHAPTER I

ALONE ON MOUNT THOMAS

IT was the 28th of May when Supervisor Winn rode up to our place from Springerville, and told me that I could be one of his fireguards, and that he would place me on Mount Thomas. That, the highest lookout station in all the forest, was the one I wanted, but had not dared ask for. I thought that it would likely be occupied by some experienced fireguard. Twice in my life I had been on Mount Thomas, but only for an hour or so each time, and it was such an interesting place that I had longed for a chance to spend days up there. At nine o'clock on the morning of June 1, all fireguards in the forest were required to telephone the Supervisor, at Springerville, that they were in their lookout stations, ready for duty, so I had but two days to gather an outfit for my season's work, and another day in which to move up to the little fire-guard cabin just under the summit of Mount

Alone on Mount Thomas

Thomas. My mother and my sister, Hannah, packed the clothing that I would need, and the towels, dishcloths, and food, and I, myself, made a good sleeping-bag by sewing a blanket and two quilts together, and slipping them into an outer cover of heavy canvas. Up to this time my one weapon had been a little 22-caliber rifle; good enough for shooting turkeys, squirrels, and even coyotes. But now I needed a real rifle, and my mother said that I could take my Uncle Cleveland's 30-30 Winchester. I found that it was still well oiled, and the inside of the barrel as bright as a new silver dollar. I promised that I would keep it in that condition.

On the last day of May, right after breakfast, Uncle John — as I call my stepfather — and I packed my outfit upon two stout horses, and then we mounted our saddle animals and took the trail for Mount Thomas. We climbed Amburon Point, at the head of our oatfield, and between the East and West Forks of the river, and threading the seven miles of forest and open park land, struck

In the Great Apache Forest

the East Fork, where, leaving its narrow canyon at the foot of the big mountain, it meanders for a mile or more down through a narrow valley of open meadow land. Here, on the west side of the valley, rising from a narrow, pineclad slope, are the Red Cliffs, or, as some of our mountain people call them, the Painted Cliffs: high upshoots of red lava that have many a hole in them where bears sleep in winter, and where mountain lions have their young, so some of our hunters say.

Well, as we were skirting the timber strip at the foot of these cliffs, ahead of us a couple of hundred yards three coyotes suddenly broke into the open and ran across the meadow so fast that they seemed to be just long, gray streaks in the grass; and they kept looking back as they ran, not at us, but at the timber from whence they had come.

"Something in there has given them a big scare. Let's have a look-see," Uncle John said to me, and I was willing enough to go in. We left the pack-horses to graze about, and had not gone more than fifty yards into the timber, taking as near as we

Alone on Mount Thomas

could the back trail of the coyotes, when we came to a spring that had been freshly roiled, and along its edges, deep in the black mud, were the tracks of a big grizzly. We then discovered the partly eaten carcass of a big buck mule deer a few yards beyond the spring. But Uncle John was n't so much interested in that as he was in the bear tracks: "Only one bear in these mountains leaves tracks the size of those, and that is old Double Killer," he said. And just then came a swirl of wind in our faces, strong with the rank odor of bear, and our horses got it, too, and whirled about so suddenly that we nearly lost our seats; nor could we check them as they carried us out of the timber as fast as the coyotes had left it. We finally brought them to a stand at the edge of the creek, and then forced them to return to the pack-horses, quietly feeding and apparently unaware of the proximity of the big bear.

"Now, is n't this just my usual luck!" Uncle John grumbled, as we again took the trail. "Here is old Double Killer feasting upon a deer carcass —

In the Great Apache Forest

I sure believe he stole it from a mountain lion — and here I am with no time to stop and watch for him to come back to the carcass! Yes, and without a rifle, even if I could take the time!”

“I’ll let you have my rifle, and you can watch for him this evening,” I proposed.

“Have n’t the time for it! Now that you have left home, it is up to me to milk ten cows every morning and evening,” he answered. “But what a fine chance this would be to kill the old beef-eater!”

And then, after some thought, he added: “But ten to one he will not now return to the carcass until night — dusk, anyhow, and I don’t want to tackle him all by myself when it is too dark to be sure of my aim. The man who wounds that bear is going to have a big fight on his hands! Yes, and will probably get the worst of it!”

It was now just seven years that this bear had roamed our part of the country. He had first made his appearance on Escodilla Mountain, doubtless coming there from the Mogollon Range, in New

Alone on Mount Thomas

Mexico. Henry Willis, a settler at the foot of Escodilla, was the first man to see him. Out hunting cattle, one day, he discovered a small band of them resting in a meadow, and as he was riding toward them a huge bear suddenly leaped into their midst from the timber, struck a steer that was lying down just one blow on the back of its neck and killed it, and then sprang from it to a cow that was getting up, and knocked her back upon the ground, killing her, too, with one blow of his huge paw. And then the bear got wind of Willis and went back into the timber. Willis hurried home and got a couple of men to watch with him for the bear to return to his kills, but he did not come until long after dark, and then he winded them and went off loudly snorting, and never did come back to the carcasses. It was some time later that the settlers learned the peculiar habit of this bear, to kill two beef animals at a time whenever he wanted meat, and so they named him "Double Killer." He did n't always make his two kills; the second animal that he attacked sometimes escaping with a few deep scratches, or so

In the Great Apache Forest

badly torn that it afterward died. Those who knew best the cruel work of Double Killer estimated that he made away with at least two thousand dollars worth of beef a year. And so, of course, many attempts were made to end his bloody career. But he avoided traps, however skillfully they were set for him, would not touch poisoned meat, and survived the bullets of the riders who occasionally got sight of him. All who saw him said that he was of huge size, that he was a silvertip, with bald — white — head, and a large white spot on his breast. The Cattlemen's Association of Apache County was now offering a reward of two hundred dollars for the death of the bear. I asked myself if I had the courage to attempt to earn it, provided I should see the old fellow in broad daylight?

Continuing on up the meadow, we crossed the creek at the head of it and entered the heavy spruce forest that clothes the steep slopes of Mount Thomas. Here were still patches of the winter snow, in places five or six feet deep. But the Forest Service telephone line repairers had already been

Alone on Mount Thomas

to the summit with their pack-train, so the trail was well broken and we made good time. Down below, the groves of Douglas firs and white pines that we had traversed were carpeted with bright flowers and full of many kinds of singing birds. Here under the tall spruces was deep silence and deep gloom that always made me shiver. The few fallen trees lay like picked bones upon the dark, needle-strewn slope. No flowers were here except those of a few scattering blueberry bushes, and not a bird did we see other than a couple of silent-flitting, drab moose birds. I was glad when, at something like 11,000 feet, we came out on the top of the ridge and into the bright sunshine, and saw above us the bare, long summit of the mountain, its rim deep with glistening snow. And then, in a little clearing, we came to the tiny fireguard cabin. Here again were flowers, and singing birds, and scampering chipmunks and squirrels. We dismounted in front of the four by six feet porch of the cabin, unpacked the horses and piled my outfit upon it, and with my Forest Service key un-

In the Great Apache Forest

locked the padlocked door and stepped inside, and found but little more than room to turn around in. The cabin is only a ten by twelve feet room of very small logs, the only kind obtainable at that height. It has two small windows; in one corner a very small cook-stove; opposite it a narrow bunk of poles; and against the wall, and near the telephone screwed to the wall, a small table. A galvanized iron, squirrel- and rat-proof food chest occupies a good share of the floor space.

"Well, here you are, snug as a bug in a rug," said Uncle John, after a good look around, "except that it's sure airy: you could sling a cat out between any two of the logs. They sure need chinking!"

"They will not be chinked by me; plenty of air is what I like," I answered, little thinking how soon I was to change my mind as to the gaping spaces. We brought my outfit inside, put the things in their proper places, and had a hurried lunch. It was about two o'clock. Uncle John said he must be going, in order to arrive home in time to do the milking. Just then the telephone bell gave two

Alone on Mount Thomas

short rings. I looked at the printed card hanging beside it and saw that the call was for me, and answered.

"That you, George?" came Supervisor Winn's voice so plainly that Uncle John could also hear what he said.

"Yes, I am here," I answered.

"Glad that you are. Green's Peak reports a fire somewhere on 38. Go up on top and report what you see."

"Right away," I answered, and hung up.

"Ha! Busy already. Well, I must be going," said Uncle John.

I helped him get the loose horses strung out on the trail, and cheerfully enough answered his good-bye. But the moment that the dwarf spruces hid him from view, my little cabin clearing seemed not to be so sunny and pleasant. "Now, you are alone, but you are not to feel lonely!" I scolded myself, and returned to the cabin for my rifle, then took the steep trail winding up through scattering, wind-torn spruces to the summit of the mountain,

In the Great Apache Forest

passing on the way drifts of snow of great depth, some of thirty feet and more.

The rocky, bare summit of this mountain is about a quarter of a mile in length — running northwest and southeast, and in its center is a gentle depression, or saddle. At its southeast end is a round, sharp uplift of rock about fifty feet in height, upon which stands the lookout station. At the other end the mountain drops off abruptly, but at a somewhat lesser height. I went straight to the station, an eight-sided, eight-windowed, conical-roofed building just large enough to contain a central chart stand, a very small stove, and one chair, and unlocked the door and went in. Then, turning about and looking off to the north, I at once saw the forest fire, about fifteen miles away, near Conaro Lake. I got behind the chart stand — on the south side of it. A round copper plate a foot in diameter, and marked with the 360 degrees of a circle, is fastened upon it, and pivoted to its center is a threaded sight, just like the sight upon a surveyor's level. I swung it around until I had it

Alone on Mount Thomas

directly in line with the smoke of the fire. Due north on the copper plate is degree 360. The level's arrow-point was on degree 10, I turned to the telephone, called the main office, and reported. The Green's Peak lookout had reported the fire on degree 38. The Supervisor had but to get the cross-section of degrees 10 and 38, upon his map of the forest, and he had the exact location to which to send his fire patrols. I soon heard the telephone calling the Cienega Flat Fire Patrol Station, and listened in: "The fire is right at Sheep Springs. Go over there as fast as you can," I heard the Supervisor saying. The Springs are about a mile south of Conaro Lake.

I was now free to return to my cabin, but I lingered there in the lookout for some time, looking down upon the world. Far to the north, across several hundred miles of the great, gray desert, I could see the cliffs of the Hopi Indians, and nearer, to the northeast, the Zuñi Buttes. Eastward as far as I could see into New Mexico, a hundred miles and more, loomed up the grim, black-forested Mogol-

In the Great Apache Forest

lon Range. To the south, across a hundred miles of greener forest, the snaky outline of the Graham Mountains hid the hot country from me, else I could have looked down upon the deserts of Old Mexico, more than three hundred miles away. More to the west, the Sierra Anches Mountains prevented a view of the great Roosevelt Lake. But I had seen pictures of it, and its huge dam, and pictures, too, of the vast fields of grain, alfalfa, cotton, and groves of fruit trees dependent upon its waters. Some of our soldiers, I knew, were night and day guarding the dam from destruction by German spies. And we fireguards were here, perched upon the peaks of the range, to prevent fires devastating the great forest and drying up the stream feeders of that wonderful irrigation system. Right under me, on the east, headed a fork of Black River, and on the south and west two forks of White River, main feeders of the high-dammed lake. I said to myself that by no fault of mine should fires kill the forest that mothered their hundreds of springs.

Alone on Mount Thomas

Fireguards before my time had told of finding some small turquoise, and black stone beads upon the sharp uplift that was capped by the lookout station. I went outside, and with the point of my knife began to scratch out the fine earth and gravel that the winds and rains had deposited in crevices in the rock, and in less than two minutes' time found two black stone beads, one of them so small that I could take it up only with the point of my knife, and then feared to place it on a rock, lest I should be unable to find it again. I carried it into the lookout, and, measuring it on the chart stand, found that it was one sixteenth of an inch in diameter, and less than a thirty-second of an inch thick; the hole through it so small that it would not admit an ordinary pin. I became interested. I wondered why the beads had been left here by the Indians, and by what Indians? How long ago? And how could they possibly have fashioned them of such small size? I placed my finds in a Forest Service envelope, and went out to search for more of them. It was then about five o'clock, and I scratched and

In the Great Apache Forest

dug about among the rocks as long as I had sufficient light. When, at last, I was forced to quit, I had collected two arrow-points, one of a glasslike substance, and one of red flint, and fifty-three beads of black, gray, red, and yellow stone, none of them a quarter of an inch in diameter, the average running about an eighth of an inch. I was quite excited over my success. Here was something to keep me occupied day after day while I watched the great forest. By diligent search I thought that I might make some wonderful finds of old Indian handicraft. I hurried down the steep trail in the gathering night, and at the edge of the cabin clearing came to a sudden stop: I had glimpsed something quickly slipping into the shadow of the spruces beyond the cabin, something that, dim though it was, had the shape of a man!

CHAPTER II

THE MOUNTAIN CAVE

WAS I frightened at what I had glimpsed? I was so badly scared that the beating of my heart seemed to be up in my throat and choking me! The shadowy thing I had seen was a man! And no friend, else he would not have been sneaking away from my approach. And swiftly though he had gone, I had not heard the slightest sound of his footsteps. He must, then, be an Apache, I thought. One of those renegades who, despite the vigilance of the soldiers, now and then somehow get possession of a gun and cartridges and sneak off upon a war trail of their own.

I did not know what to do. But after standing for a long time listening and staring about in the deepening night, I at last made a run for the cabin, got safely inside, and slammed shut the door and barred it. Then it suddenly dawned upon me that I must not light the lamp. I could curtain the win-

In the Great Apache Forest

dows with dishcloths, but there were all those yawning spaces between the logs that I could not cover, through which an enemy could see me and shoot me the instant that I struck a light. I sat upon the bunk and took off my shoes, and then, rifle in hand, stole from wall to wall of the cabin and stared out through the unchinked spaces; and for all the good that did, might as well have stuck my head into a sack. The night was intensely dark; I could not even see the pile of split white-spruce stovewood less than ten feet from the south wall!

But, presently, I heard something; like the cautious steps of some one to the east of the cabin. Just such sounds as I imagined moccasined feet would make upon the stony ground. They had been faint at first; they became fainter and soon ceased. I stood against the wall a long time. My legs began to tremble. I felt my way back to the bunk and sat upon it, again listening, open-mouthed, for those shuffling, soft, padding steps. I must have sat there for hours. I was hungry, but did not dare risk the noise I should make in open-

The Mountain Cave

ing the iron food chest for a handful of crackers and some cheese. And how I wished that I was down home, safe in my bed! This was my first night away from my people; and here I was, eleven miles from them, and in danger. How sorry I was for myself! Several times I went sound asleep sitting straight up upon the bunk, and awoke with a start, and scolded myself, and said that I just would keep awake! Then the next I knew dawn had come, and I was lying flat upon my back, my rifle tightly gripped with both hands. I sprang up and looked out of the windows, and through the wall spaces, and saw nothing to alarm me. The daylight itself was heartening. I slowly unbarred the door and stepped out upon the little porch. About twenty feet away a porcupine was descending a small spruce that he had partly denuded of its bark. When he left the trunk and waddled off down the slope, he made just the shuffling noise that I had heard in the night: "You are the Apache that was prowling around here, you scalper of trees!" I yelled to him, and the sound of my voice was good

In the Great Apache Forest

in my ears. And seizing a stick I took after him and knocked him in the head. All Forest Service men are required to kill porcupines, for in the course of a year they do a great deal of damage to the forest.

I went back to the cabin, built a fire in the little stove, and washed face and hands. Then, as I sliced some bacon, opened a can of corn, and made some biscuits, it suddenly came to me that, though the porcupine had probably made the noise I had heard in the night, he certainly was not the shadowy figure I had seen skurrying into the shelter of the spruces! All my fears of the night were back in me with a rush. The temptation to seize my rifle and strike out on the run down the mountain for home was almost irresistible. Then I said to myself: "I've just got to stay here! I've got to stick to this job no matter what happens to me! My Uncle Cleve is n't running from those terrible Huns in France, and I shall not run from a sneaking Apache!"

I rushed my cooking and bolted my breakfast, for I had until nine o'clock to report from the lookout, up on top, and I was going to make those cabin

The Mountain Cave

walls proof against the eyes of any prowlers of the night. I collected a number of lengths of small, dead spruces, quartered them, and drove them into the wall spaces from the inside. But fast though I worked, at eight-thirty I had chinked but three of the walls. I dropped the axe, seized my rifle, locked the cabin door, and hurried up the trail to the summit.

As soon as I arrived at the lookout I swept the whole forest as far as I could see with the field-glasses that had been furnished me, and at nine o'clock reported in that no fire was to be seen from Mount Thomas. Then, for a time, I listened to other lookouts making similar reports, some of them away down in the Blue Range, at the south end of the forest. Happening, then, to look into the canyon of Black River, a half-mile or more almost straight down from me, I thought that I saw a faint haze of smoke. But even with the glasses I could not be sure that my eyes had not deceived me. The sun had not yet reached that part of the canyon and it was in deep shadow, made all the

In the Great Apache Forest

darker by the heavy growth of spruce that shrouded its steep sides and bottom. I marked the particular spot in it, where I thought that I had seen the smoke, by a narrow strip of grassland that bordered the stream. Again and again in the course of the morning I looked down at the place, failed to see the least sign of smoke, and almost convinced myself that I had been mistaken in the first instance. I had heard our mountain men say that this canyon of Black River was the worst one in the whole range; that in their roundups it was the one place they passed, for it was so rough that neither cattle nor horses could ascend it. Since it was so inaccessible, and as there had been no electric storm to start a fire in it, I argued that if I had seen anything, it had been mist rising from the stream in the cool of the morning.

In my haste to leave the cabin, I had neglected to bring a lunch. And now, when noon came, I was very hungry. By the rules of the Service, I was privileged to take an hour off — from twelve until one — for lunch. But hungry though I was, I just

The Mountain Cave

would not go back to the cabin until I had to. That flitting figure I had glimpsed in the dusk haunted me. Up here on top I was perfectly safe: no one could come anywhere near my lookout station if I was minded to forbid his advance.

I concluded to use my noon hour in exploring the whole length of the summit of my mountain, and set off along its crest, from which I could see well down both slopes. The one on the west side is bare for a long way down, but on the east side a few scattering groups of stunted spruces stand within a hundred yards of the top. Not a treelet of them has a limb nor even the stub of a limb upon the west side of its trunk, proving how fierce and constant are the west winds except in the three months of summer.

All the way from the rough rock uplift at the southeast end of the mountain, and well beyond its saddle, the footing is of coarsely decomposed rock; then, for the last several hundred yards to the northwest end of the summit, the formation is of slabs of rock of varying size. I was passing over

In the Great Apache Forest

the first of these when I noticed, some fifty yards down to the west, a pile of the slabs in the shape of a half-circle — bowing from me — and several feet in height. I knew at once that man, not an earthquake, had made that pile, and hurried down to it. I nearly fell into a deep, narrow rift in the rock, from around which the slabs forming the half-circle had been heaved, and by Indians, in the long ago, as was proved by quantities of broken, brightly painted pottery scattered all around the place. The length of the fault in the rock, about six feet, is with that of the mountain, northwest and southeast, and about four feet wide down for about ten feet to a projection from the west side. From it the fault, too narrow to admit the body of a man, goes on down into intense blackness.

I was sure excited over my find. "My own find! My own cave hole!" I said, over and over, for I well knew all the men who had been fireguards upon the mountain, and though all had told of finding beads and broken pottery around the lookout, not one of them had even mentioned this

The Mountain Cave

place. I knelt at the edge of the northwest side of the hole and looked down into it, and saw that at ten feet down there was a black hole in the wall opposite me, apparently large enough to admit the body of a man. It might be, I thought, the passageway into a large cave in the mountain, in which had lived the people whose broken pottery was scattered all around me. And if that were so, what might I not find in the cave! Beautiful pottery; weapons; clothing, of course. Perhaps gold and silver, too! How I wished that I had a rope and a light of some kind. I could then explore that passageway.

My hour was about up, but I got upon my knees, a few feet down the slope from the hole, and soon found eleven beads in the crevices of the rock, one of them a turquoise bead almost a quarter of an inch in diameter. I hurried back to the lookout and, calling Springerville, reported that I could not see a fire anywhere in the forest.

I went outside and began to look for more beads, and in the very first little crevice that I scratched

In the Great Apache Forest

out, found seven. From the next crevice, no more than a foot long and a couple of inches wide, I got nine beads and a white flint arrow-point. At that rate I estimated that there must be thousands and thousands of beads and many arrow-points in the crevices of the little rock butte, at its base no more than a hundred feet in diameter. And why were they there, and around my cave hole, in such profusion, and apparently nowhere else upon the mountain, I wondered. Had there been a great battle between different tribes — the victors scattering to the winds the belongings of those they killed? No, that was not reasonable. The victors would have gone off with every necklace and every arrow-point of those they killed. The mystery of it was more than I could solve. I said to myself that I would cease puzzling about it, but I could not get it out of my mind. And that hole off there in the mountain — I just had to go into it! If I could only call my people on the telephone and ask that Uncle John bring me a rope. But there was little chance of my calling them; the Forest Service was

The Mountain Cave

so short of men that this summer there was no ranger at Riverside Station, a half-mile north of my home. I might ring Riverside for days and get no answer, unless one of the fire patrols happened in there.

In the middle of the afternoon, while I was still scratching out beads — by that time I had more than a hundred — the telephone rang for me and I hurried inside and took down the receiver: “Hello!” I said.

“Hello! Is that you, George? Are you all right up there?” came my sister Hannah’s voice, and, oh, how glad I was to hear it.

“All right,” I answered. “But how did you get to the telephone? Is there a new ranger at Riverside?”

“No. I climbed in through the window. Mother and I were worrying about you; we just had to know how you are getting on, all alone up there. Tell us all about it!”

I considered a moment before replying. Should I tell them about the sneaking figure I had seen near the cabin? No. I would keep my troubles to

In the Great Apache Forest

myself. I answered that I was more than all right, and sure excited over some finds I had made. And went on to tell about the beads I had found, the cave hole I had discovered, and how much I wanted a rope and candles, so that I could go into it. And at that Hannah became excited, and asked a lot of questions about the cave, just where it was located, and its appearance. And at last she said that I should have the things I wanted; she would bring them up and help me explore the place. I could look for her at noon the next day. And when she said that, I knew that I would have the rope and candles. Hannah is a girl that always does as she promises. Although two years younger than I, she can ride as well as the best of us, and of "sand" she has aplenty.

I was happy enough the rest of the afternoon, thinking of what I might find in the cave, and at six o'clock I rang in, reported no fires, and started for the cabin. As I neared it all my uneasiness came back to me. I left the trail and sneaked on down through the spruces and around to the north

The Mountain Cave

side of the little clearing and looked out. A moose bird was hopping about before the cabin porch and a chipmunk was sitting upon the peak of the roof, eating something that it held in its little paws. They gave me the feeling that all was well there. I crossed the clearing, unlocked the door, and went in, and looked around. Everything was apparently as I had left it. I took my bucket and went down to the spring for water, and then finished chinking the cabin walls. There were still places — where the chinking did not fit well against the logs — that were open, but when I daubed the outside of the cracks with mud, all would be tightly closed. I dug a hole in the ground, filled it with earth that I found near the spring, poured in some water and worked it to a sticky mass, and slammed handful after handful of it into the spaces in the south wall, and completely finished that side, and still had time to cook my supper before nightfall. I did not intend to use a light in the cabin until its walls were proof against the eyes of any prowlers of the night.

In the Great Apache Forest

I washed, and built a fire in the stove, considering what I should have for supper. A slice of ham, boiled potatoes, bread and butter and jam, I concluded, and opened the food chest, and tossed sacks and packages about: my big, uncut ham was n't there! Had n't I seen it in the chest that morning — or anyhow the evening before? I was almost sure that I had seen it that morning; or when Uncle John had unloaded the grub outfit and brought it in. I believed that I had seen it in the chest some time or other, but could not be sure. Maybe it had been overlooked when we were packing my outfit, at home. I just hated to think that the ham had been in the chest and had been stolen from me. All day long I had tried to convince myself that I had not seen a shadowy figure of a man sneaking away from me into the spruces. But now — The door had always been locked during my absence. I went to the front window: it was well nailed down. I ran to the other one, and raised the lower sash with ease! The ham could have been stolen from me! All of my fears of the

The Mountain Cave

night before came back with a rush. I did n't take time to cook potatoes. I barred the door, hastily fried a couple of slices of bacon, and ate them with the cold biscuit that were left from my morning meal, and went to bed with my rifle beside me. I wondered if any Boy Scout in all our United States was having as fearsome and lonely a time as I, fireguarding there on Mount Thomas, eleven miles from my nearest neighbor?

"If there is such a one, he has got to show me!" I said, and for all my uneasiness, fell asleep. And with a start soon awoke, listened, heard nothing more than some mice scampering across the floor and upon the table, and slept again. At the first sign of dawn I hurried into my clothes, washed, and cooked my breakfast. I did n't want to remain in that spruce-surrounded cabin a moment longer than I could help! I wanted to be up on top, where I could see a long way in every direction. I was n't long in going up there, and upon the trail found cause for more uneasiness; in a place where the path was wet and muddy from

In the Great Apache Forest

melting snow above were the fresh tracks of a huge bear. Old Double Killer's tracks, I was sure! He had doubtless finished eating his deer carcass, and was prowling about in search of more meat. I thought about old man Lilly's trouble, over in the Blue Range, with a bear of this size a few weeks back: without warning, the bear had come charging out at him from a thicket, and he had stood his ground and opened fire with his big Winchester, and with his last shot — the very last cartridge in his weapon — the bear had fallen dead at his feet. And what a bear it was; its hide had measured eleven feet in length and eight in width!

I was sure that old Double Killer was as big as that Blue Range grizzly. With my little 30-30 rifle, it was small chance that I would have for my life if he came charging me from these spruces. I legged it up the trail as fast as I could go, never once stopping until I reached the top of the mountain. From the saddle I looked down upon a bare ridge running west from the mountain,



HE WAS TURNING OVER ROCKS AND LICKING THE EXPOSED
UNDER SURFACES

The Mountain Cave

and dividing two deep-canyoned, heavily timbered forks of White River, and there, on its crest, I saw Double Killer wandering about among the rocks. I ran up into the lookout, took up the field-glasses, and watched him. He was turning over rocks and licking the exposed under surfaces of some of them, licking off the ants that clung to them, of course, and I thought what small business that was for him, killer of big steers with one blow of his long-clawed paws! And then I thought that the ants were probably to him what candy is to us: not real food, but — a little of it — very good eating, all the same. He was all of a half-mile from me, too far for a shot at him. In a few minutes he wandered down the ridge and entered the heavy timber, no doubt to sleep during the day.

It was so early when I arrived in the lookout that the west side of the mountains was still in deep shadow. I swept them and their valleys with my glasses and saw nowhere any signs of a fire. I then looked close down into the Black River Canyon, and, as on the previous morning, saw a

In the Great Apache Forest

smokelike haze below the little grass park bordering the stream. It was so faint, however, that I could not be sure it was smoke. I said that it could n't be smoke; nor fog from the water: that what I saw was a patch of the bright light of the early morning, let into the dark canyon through a gap in the high ridge on the east.

I went outside, began scratching out more rock crevices, and almost at once found two arrow-points, a large one of flint and barbed, and a very small one, without barbs, of the glasslike rock, and so clear that I could see through it. Of the two, the barbed one appeared to be the most effective point, yet how much more deadly was the other; how very much farther it would penetrate flesh. I wondered if its owner had ever shot it into an enemy?

At nine o'clock I went in to the telephone and reported no fire anywhere in sight. And then I called Riverside Station, on the mere chance that a fire patrol might be there, and got no answer except the roar of the Supervisor's voice, shout-

The Mountain Cave

ing: "Get off the line there, whoever you are! Don't you know that there is no one at Riverside? You quit interrupting Service business!"

I quit! I had wanted to get word to Hannah not to come up. Since discovering the loss of my ham, I had been thinking that I ought not to let her run the risk in coming up that eleven-mile lonely trail. If there were bad men in this part of the forest, it was no place for her to be riding. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that the ham had probably been left at home, but down in my inmost mind I almost knew that I had seen it in the food chest. No doubt she was now on her way to me, and if she met with no mishap, would arrive at my cabin at about twelve o'clock. Well, I should be there at that time, and at one o'clock, if she failed to appear, fires or no fires, I should have to go down the trail to look for her. And if she did come all right at noon, I decided that, when I went off duty in the evening, I should spend the night in seeing her safely home and getting back to the cabin. I could ride back upon her

In the Great Apache Forest

horse and turn him loose and he would go straight down to our herd.

I kept on hunting for beads and arrow-points — and finding some — until my eyes began to ache, and then went into the lookout. The telephone rang one long, the call for the Supervisor's office, and I listened in. Why not? Forest Service business was my business. I wanted to know what was going on. And now, listening, I heard William Hammond, the owner of a small sawmill located on the Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, five miles west of my home, and almost at the northern edge of the forest, telling the Supervisor that he was having serious trouble with two of his men, strangers who had a week before dropped in off the road and applied for work, and got it. They had proved to be I.W.W. agitators, and, failing to induce his regular employees to join the order, they had called for their wages, demanding three times the amount due them, and upon his refusal to pay it, had sworn that they would burn his mill and the whole Apache National Forest.

"Where are they now?" the Supervisor asked.

The Mountain Cave

“They shouldered their blanket rolls and went off up the road.”

“Well, you just guard your mill, and if they show up, shoot, and shoot to kill. And I will order some of my patrols over to your place, and at the first outbreak of fire that way, they’ll be right on top of those I.W.W.’s!”

I continued listening and heard the Supervisor ordering different patrols to move to the mill, explaining why they were to go, and that they were to go well armed, and take no chances with the firebugs.

Then the Supervisor called me: “George, there are two I.W.W. firebugs threatening to burn the forest —”

“Yes, I know, I’ve been listening,” I interrupted.

“Well, I must ask you to spend more than the regular hours in your lookout until they are disposed of,” he went on. “I would like you to spend all your daylight hours there; even your noon hour; and keep your eyes on the forest all the time, and especially that part of it around the mill.”

In the Great Apache Forest

“Yes! I’ll do so,” I answered, “but this noon I have to go down to the cabin to meet my sister, who is coming up with some things for me —” I hesitated: Should I tell him about my own troubles, my suspicion that there were bad men in my vicinity, too? No. Not at this time, I concluded.

“All right, meet your sister, and go back on top as soon as you can,” he replied, and hung up.

CHAPTER III

THE FIREBUGS AT WORK

MORE than ever, now, I wished that Hannah was not coming up. My new orders would prevent me taking her home, and just now the forest was no place for a girl to travel alone. And what she was bringing me would be of no use for some time to come: until I got back my morning and evening hours, I could have no time for exploring my cave hole.

At noon, as I descended the trail to the cabin, I had decided to send Hannah straight home as fast as her horse could carry her. But the moment I entered the clearing I knew that would be impossible: there she was, sitting upon the little porch, surrounded with sacks, ropes, and her roll of bedding, and a pack-saddle and riding-saddle upon the ground told that she had turned her horses down the trail.

“How long have you been here?” I asked.

In the Great Apache Forest

"Maybe an hour. Why? You don't seem glad to see me."

And what I said to her shows where my mind was: "That big ham I was to bring up when we came — did Uncle John and I overlook it — is it down home?"

"No. Of course it is n't there. I packed it in your outfit myself. You have n't lost it?"

"Worse than that! It has been stolen! Taken right out of the cabin! These are bad times up here. I wish you had n't come. I was going to send you right home, but now you can't go: your horses are halfway home by this time!"

"Ha! As though I would go back before seeing your cave!" she cried.

"The cave! There's no time for it now!" I said, and went on to tell her all about the sneaking man I had seen, and all that the Supervisor had just told me. That sobered her. "And what is more," I added, "old Double Killer is prowling about here, too. I saw him this morning. I can show you his tracks in the trail to the summit."

The Firebugs at Work

"It does look bad," she said. "But here I am and here I stay. I guess I can stand it if you can. And you know that I can shoot!" She tapped the holster at her side, in which was thrust her 38 Colt automatic pistol.

"Yes, you will have to stay until I can get word to Uncle John to come after you," I said. I did n't tell her how much I admired her courage.

"Now, George, promise that you will not telephone them about this! Mind, if mother hears about this ham stealing, and about old Double Killer being up here, she will have you back home in a hurry, as well as me," she begged.

I had n't thought of that, and I knew that she was right. Mother would have us out from here, too quick. And what shame then, for me. It would be said that I was afraid to stay and face the dangers. And me a Boy Scout!

"Well, we'll see about it," I answered. "But come. I must return to the lookout. Let's sling this stuff into the cabin and be upon our way."

We got the outfit inside, took some crackers and

In the Great Apache Forest

cheese for a lunch, and a canteen of water, and at twenty minutes to one were entering the lookout. The telephone was ringing for me. I answered.

"Glad to know that you are back up there. No sign of fire the sawmill way, is there?" the Supervisor said.

"No, nor elsewhere."

"Good. Well, keep your eyes peeled," he answered, and rang off.

"You see how it is: I have to be here every minute of the day from sunrise to sunset. There's no use talking about me exploring the cave," I told Hannah.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed. "You can go into it while I stand watch in here. But first, I want to see the hole: show me where it is."

She was right. With her help I could have all the time that I wanted to go into it. But we had not brought up the rope and candles, and I did not like to leave the summit to go after them. I pointed the way to the cave. Down past a bend in the west slope, it was not in sight from the lookout, but I ex-

The Firebugs at Work

plained that she could find it by the half-circle of rock slabs piled below the entrance, and she hurried off down along the summit. I watched her until she turned from it and went out of sight, and, taking up the field-glasses, discovered a sudden upburst of smoke away south in the Blue Range. I sighted it with the chart level, went to the telephone and reported: "Fire on 182, away down in the Blue."

A few minutes later, I heard Honeymoon Meadows and Saddle Mountain lookouts giving their degree sightings of the fire; and then the Supervisor ordering to it the patrols in that section of the forest.

I took the glasses again, and stared down into Black River Canyon and the little grass park in it. No smoke was there nor any living, moving thing. I turned to the north: smoke was curling up from the forest due west of the sawmill. Yes, and also from a point a mile or more farther west: the I.W.W. firebugs had begun their destructive work. I sighted the two fires and quickly reported them, and kept the receiver to my ear. Green's Peak reported them; the Supervisor ordered his C. C.

In the Great Apache Forest

Ranch and Cienega Flat patrols to a fire at Sheep Springs, and another a mile west of the Springs. He then conferred with the patrols at the sawmill, started them to the fires, and then Mr. Hammond, the mill-owner, said that he would send his men with them, and himself and wife guard their property. How I hoped that the I.W.W. men would be found and killed before they could do further damage to our forest! It was bad enough to see the great trees burning from a fire started by lightning or by some careless traveler; but to see them destroyed—deliberately destroyed—by enemies of our country was unbearable. I took up my rifle and said to it: “Partner, how I would like to empty you into those two Hun helpers down there!”

I was very uneasy; too worried to search for more beads. I went outside and walked around and around the lookout, stared now and then at the Sheep Springs fires, saw that the smoke from them was increasing instead of diminishing in volume. Well, the patrols had not had time to arrive there and begin fighting them. It was going to be a big

The Firebugs at Work

fight, for a strong west wind was blowing. Hannah now came in sight, up on top from the cave hole, and ran toward me, stopping now and then to wave her hands to me and point to the fires, until, at last, she was near enough to hear me shout: "Yes. I see them. I have reported them!"

She came up into the lookout, out of breath and almost crying: "Those awful I.W.W. men! They set those fires!" she gasped.

"Sure they did! And will set more if the patrols don't kill them," I answered, and proceeded to tell her what was going on down there.

"I can't understand how men can be so bad!" she exclaimed.

An hour passed. Two hours, and we saw that the smoke of the two fires was dying out. The patrols had them under control, would soon extinguish them. Anxiously we waited to listen in at the telephone, and learn if the two firebugs had been given what was due them.

We began talking of other things. Of the cave, of course. Hannah thought that it was a wonderful

In the Great Apache Forest

find I had made; that we might find some very wonderful things in it left there by the ancient people. A prospector who had once stopped a few days with us had told us about caves in Old Mexico in which had been found gold idols and dishes, along with pieces of beautiful pottery. Here, too, was pottery. Might we not also find gold with it in our cave? The very thought of it was exciting. We knew a little, a very little, about those old pottery-makers. Five miles down the Little Colorado from our home we had seen the tumbled-down rock walls of their ancient homes, with great quantities of broken pottery scattered about. There, too, could be traced the courses of their irrigating ditches; and upon the faces of some near-by rocks we had seen pictures that they had cut in. Pictures of men, animals, and of things which none of the settlers could understand. Some said that they were not Indians who had lived there, and evidently raised some kind of crops which they irrigated; that they must have been one of the lost tribes of Israel, gone long before the Indians came. Well, we talked and talked about

The Firebugs at Work

all that we had heard, and wondered if any of it was true, and planned just how we would go down into my cave and explore it. And so the afternoon wore on, and at five o'clock I informed the Supervisor that I could see no more smoke from the Sheep Springs fires, nor any fresh fires starting.

"Good. But you just stay where you are until nine o'clock. Remember, a whole lot depends upon you and Green's Peak lookout. I don't believe that the patrols have caught those firebugs, else they would have been 'phoning about it."

He was right. Not fifteen minutes after he hung up, we heard one of the patrols telephoning him that they had the fires completely out, but had been unable to find the men who had set them. We learned, too, that there was to be an all-night guarding of the mill, and that the deputy sheriff had started with a posse of men from Springerville in search of the two fire-setters.

We had brought up but a light lunch at noon and were now very hungry. But that should n't happen again, we said. In the morning we would bring

In the Great Apache Forest

up a sackful of provisions and dishes and frying-pan, so that we could cook meals upon the lookout stove whenever we wanted to.

The evening wore on, and at seven-thirty, by my time, there was the most beautiful sunset that we had ever seen. Then the darkness began to come up out of the deep canyons under us, and up and up the steep slopes of our mountain until, at about eight-twenty, we were in darkness in the lookout. Said Hannah then, with a little shiver: "I don't fancy going down to the cabin in this awful dark. With old Double Killer wandering about, and maybe worse than he, it will be no fun stumbling down the trail."

Neither did I fancy it, but I would n't say so: "Pooh! We shall be safe enough going down; we shall just have to be careful not to stumble on the rocks and get a bad fall," I told her, and stood up. And at once I saw the bright red glow of a small fire down in the Black River Canyon! Right where I had twice thought that there was smoke! "Oh!" I gasped.

The Firebugs at Work

“What?” Hannah cried, springing from the chair.

“The ham-stealer! Look down into the canyon! See the fire!”

She looked, and gave a little squeal of fright.

“What shall we do?” she presently whispered.

I had been watching the fire; now and then it became suddenly obscured; by some one passing in front of it, of course. “It is a cooking fire, no doubt about that!” I said. “And whoever is down there has known my hours of duty as well as I do, and has never had a fire going when I have been up here. But on two mornings I have imagined that I saw a faint haze down there. Now I know that it really was smoke.”

“Who can he be? And why hiding down there?” Hannah wondered.

“Maybe they, instead of he. Maybe a lot of white law-breakers or renegade Apaches in hiding down there. I’m going to report it,” I said, and rang the office, in Springerville, rang and rang, and got no answer. Then I tried to get Green’s Peak;

In the Great Apache Forest

the sawmill; C. C. Ranch; the Indian Agency. None of them answered my call, and I knew that something had gone wrong with the telephone line. The firebugs, or other bad men infesting the forest, had probably cut it. Of course the telephone line men would be out to repair it as soon as possible, but in the meantime so many fires might be started that they never could be got under control.

Said Hannah: "This is terrible. I am not going down to that cabin, not if I starve! I would not sleep down there for all the mines of Arizona!"

"We just have to go to it, and I believe that we shall be safe enough. But we shall come right back, with our bedding. Then we'll bring up the food, all of it, if we have to make four trips with it, and we'll make the lookout our little fort until this trouble is over," I told her.

She hesitated, and finally said: "The telephone line is cut, you can do no good here until it is repaired, and the repairers will have to pass our home. Let us go down there. Let us start right now. Not by the trail, but down by the way of the West Fork.

The Firebugs at Work

That will be best, George. Then, when the repair men come along, you can return here with them."

"I promised the Supervisor that I would stick to this place during the season, and right here I stick just as long as I can," I told her. "Come. We'll begin bringing our outfit up here. We can do it safely enough. The ham-stealer is cooking his supper: he can't be down there in the canyon and at the cabin at the same time."

"All right! Lead!" She cried, and without another word followed me from the lookout. I was proud of her, but did n't tell her so. Not many girls, I'll bet, would have had the courage to follow me down that dark mountain-side, where old Double Killer's tracks were almost fresh in the trail, and where, at the cabin, we might meet with worse than he!

We descended the trail as noiselessly as was possible, but for all our care, we now and then dislodged rocks that rattled down the slope with a noise that seemed like thunder in our ears. We stood a long time at the edge of the clearing, looking, lis-

In the Great Apache Forest

tening, then silently sneaked across it to the cabin, itself a black blur in the darkness. I unlocked the door and we went in: "We can't pack up without a light," I said, and put a match to the lamp on the table and stared about the place: everything was apparently as we had left it — no! some sugar was scattered upon the floor in front of the food chest I flung up the cover and we saw at once that some one had tumbled its contents about. The sugar sack was half emptied; some bacon had been taken; also a pound can of coffee; a can of baking-powder; some dried apples and part of the sack of salt. We stared at the walls and the floor of the cabin. I went to the windows; found them still nailed fast. And then we stared at one another: "Sister," I said, "who ever the thief is, he has a Forest Service key!"

She nodded. Her face was dead white in the lamplight; her eyes full of fear. "Let's hurry!" she whispered.

We sure did hurry! With two sweeps of my arm I got the dishes, knives, forks, spoons, and things on the table into a sack, then rolled our bedding while

The Firebugs at Work

Hannah put the food in the chest into three large sacks and the cooking-vessels into another sack. Then, in three trips, we got everything but one roll of bedding well up the trail beyond the clearing. I went back for it, and put out the light and locked the door. But we could not carry all that stuff up the terribly steep trail to the summit in three or four trips: seven times we went up it with our loads, puffing, sweating, straining every muscle of our bodies; and when, at last, we got everything up to the lookout, our strength suddenly went from us; we sank down upon the rocks outside, and Hannah almost at once fell sound asleep.

The fire in the canyon had gone out. I looked at my watch: twelve o'clock and past. When I had rested somewhat, I got a pailful of snow from a near bank, set it on the little stove in the lookout and built a fire. How glad I was that there was plenty of snow; we should have to depend upon it for all the water we used. As soon as the fire was going well, I opened our bed rolls and with blankets and quilts completely shaded the windows of the

In the Great Apache Forest

lookout. I then lighted a candle, got Hannah inside, and prepared a good meal. I had to waken her again when it was ready. How we did eat; never in our lives, we thought, had we been so hungry. And for the time we felt quite safe where we were. Not a ray of our light could be seen from the outside of the lookout; no one would think of looking for us there that night.

“That grub thief, how surprised he will be when he comes again to the cabin,” I laughed.

“You need n’t laugh: he will be sneaking up here,” said Hannah.

“He will; and I shall be watching for him,” I answered. “You are going to watch during the day while I sleep, and at night I’ll stand guard. I don’t care how dark it is, he can’t approach this little rock butte without me hearing him, and if he comes up right close I can see him and he will get what is due him!”

I went for more snow, and when we had melted it and washed the dishes, we put out the light, took down the window coverings, and Hannah made her

The Firebugs at Work

bed inside, and I crawled into my sleeping-bag out on the north side of the lookout, at the head of the trail. I fell asleep wondering what would happen on the morrow; if we should see the line repairers and learn that the fire-setters had been killed or captured? And most I wondered who it was that had a Forest Service key and had stolen my food? The padlocks and door locks of the Service were of especial make, all alike, and could be opened only with the keys that came with them. Had some discharged employee held out one of the keys and turned bad man?

When we awoke, at dawn, a fire was again burning down in the Black River Canyon, and without doubt more of my food was being cooked over it. I told Hannah that I believed I could sneak down there and see who the thief was, and get safely back. But at that she made a great outcry: she would not stay there alone in the lookout for a moment; if I went down into the canyon she would go, too.

The fire in the canyon went out so suddenly, at

In the Great Apache Forest

sunrise, that we were sure it had been quenched with water. I swept the great forest with the glasses and was glad that there was not anywhere the least signs of a fire. We had our breakfast, washed the dishes, piled all our things close up against the lookout — there was n't room for them inside — and then time hung heavy upon our hands. We had too many worries to continue gathering beads and arrow-points or to explore my cave hole.

From the south side of the little rock butte upon which the lookout is perched, the mountain makes a long and very steep drop to a narrow, bare ridge running south and separating the forks of Black River and White River. We happened to be looking down upon it, soon after breakfast, and saw three large deer — all bucks, apparently — come tearing out of the timber upon its east slope, pause for a moment on top, looking back whence they had come, and then race on down into the timber of the west slope. .

“A mountain lion must have frightened them!” Hannah exclaimed.

The Firebugs at Work

“More likely our grub thief; they came up from his canyon,” I told her, and turned my glasses that way just in time to see two big turkey gobblers come running up on the bare slope, spring into the air and sail off, down over the timber. Hannah saw them, too, although she had no glasses, and cried: “Now we shall see what frightened the deer, and them!”

But we did n’t, although we closely watched the place for a long time. And finally I said: “It was man that frightened the deer and turkeys; had it been a lion, it would have come out on their trail, a little way, anyhow. The chances are that right now that grub-stealer is there near the edge of the timber, staring up at us!”

And at that Hannah shivered. “How dreadful to think that one is being watched by the snake eyes of a robber — murderer, maybe! I just can’t bear it!” She sprang up and went into the shelter of the lookout. I followed, and tried the telephone, got no answer to my calls, and went outside to watch again.

In the Great Apache Forest

The morning dragged on, oh, how slowly! We became so nervous that we could n't sit still; we just milled around and around the lookout, staring down, and now and then trying the silent telephone. And then, near noon, we shouted and waved our hands, and Hannah danced, for there was Uncle John hurrying toward us in the trail up from the cabin.

"So! You've moved camp, I see!" he exclaimed, coming up on top and staring at our outfit pile against the lookout. "Well, how goes it? We went over to Riverside Station, found that the telephone was n't working, and your mother got to worrying and sent me up to learn how you are?"

"Oh, such a time we have had! Terrible!" Hannah cried, and told him all our troubles, I putting in a word now and then.

He looked very solemn when we had finished, asked some questions, and then said; "I guess your camp robber is Henry King."

"Henry King!" we cried. Did n't we know him — know of him! Wife-beater, lazy, drinking, gam-

The Firebugs at Work

bling man who had drifted into Nutrioso — a settlement a few miles east of us — several years back, married Jennie Ames, and treated her so badly that she had left him!

“Yes, Henry King!” Uncle John went on. “He enlisted and was sent to Camp Kearny, and about a month ago deserted. Well, at daylight, about ten days ago, his nearest neighbor there in Nutrioso, old Mr. Jacobs, saw him sneaking away from his cabin with his rifle and a pack on his back —”

“And he was once a fireguard — I’ll bet he kept a Forest Service key, and claimed that he lost it,” I said.

“No doubt. He would do that all right. Well, we’ll just go down in the canyon and get Mr. King, and give the fifty dollars reward for him to the Red Cross,” said Uncle John.

“But he will fight! You will be killed!” Hannah cried.

CHAPTER IV

HUNTING THE DESERTER

NO. We'll get the drop on him!" Uncle John told her, grimly.

"You said 'we.' Do you mean that I can go with you?" I asked.

"Sure you can go. I may need you to help herd him. Hannah can fireguard for you while we are gone," he answered.

"Oh, no! No! I would n't stay here alone for all the world!" sister cried.

"Then you will come with us. The telephone is n't working; you can't do any good here if a fire does break out. Let's have some lunch and be off," Uncle John told her.

Hannah made no answer to that. She looked scared as she turned from us to start a fire in the stove.

Of course I asked Uncle John about the firebugs, but he knew no more about them than I, and doubted that they had been found. I told him,

Hunting the Deserter

then, about my find of the cave hole, and about seeing old Double Killer. And then we had lunch and planned how we should go after the deserter. We were to sneak down through the timber and strike the bottom of the canyon at a point below the little grass park, where I had seen the campfires, and then cautiously, step by step, move up and make our capture.

“Afraid?” Uncle John asked Hannah, when she had washed the lunch dishes.

“Yes, scared, but going with you, all the same!” she answered.

We took up our rifles and Hannah belted on her pistol, and we started down the trail to the cabin, where Uncle John’s horse was tied and restlessly pawing the ground; and from there we turned off along the divide, followed it for four or five hundred yards, and began the descent into the canyon. The going was good under the spruces for some distance, and then we began having trouble to find a way past a series of small cliffs; there we had to be very careful where we stepped, lest we dislodge

In the Great Apache Forest

rocks to go crashing down and give the camper warning of our approach. When, at last, we arrived at the bottom of the canyon, we found that it was very narrow and full of boulders — some of them as large as a house — with only a few clumps of willows here and there along the stream. The grass park that we were heading for is on the south side of the stream, so we crossed and turned up toward it, and almost at once came into a well-used game trail running parallel with the creek, and about fifty yards above it. We had not followed it far when Uncle John, in the lead, paused and pointed at a muddy place in it: there, half obliterated by the hooves of passing deer, were the footprints of a man who had gone up the trail.

“Days old. Wore broad shoes. Army shape,” he whispered to us as we bent over the tracks. “I guess we get Mr. Deserter, *poco pronto!*”

“But he will fight!” said Hannah.

“Wife-beaters generally don’t fight! However, maybe you’d better keep well behind us from here on,” he told her.

Hunting the Deserter

Hannah said no more. We started on, but instead of dropping back she kept close behind me. Uncle John, looking over his shoulder, motioned her to slow up. She shook her head so determinedly that her two hair braids flopped straight out, and were so funny — her face red, her eyes snapping, that we put hand to mouth and laughed.

All the same, this was no laughing matter. Why should n't the deserter fight when he well knew that, if he was captured, he would go to jail for years and years? I was bound to face whatever was to happen, ahead there on the trail, but, oh, how I wished that Henry King had never come into our part of the mountains!

Moving on silently in the beaten trail, and more and more slowly, we at last sighted the open grass park, and then stood a long time looking out at it, and searching the timber bordering it for our man. On our right some dead wood had been broken up and carried away, and a young spruce stripped of its branches — for a bed, of course, but of him there was no sign. "You two stand right here, while

In the Great Apache Forest

I circle around a bit," Uncle John told us, and turned straight off to the left and was soon out of our sight. Hannah then came up beside me, pistol in hand, and we waited fearfully, hardly breathing, for whatever was to happen: waited for hours, it seemed, and at last heard Uncle John shout: "Come on! Come ahead, youngsters, the bird has flown!"

I uncocked my rifle. Hannah slipped her pistol back into its holster. All my excitement went with Uncle John's call. I felt suddenly tired. We went to the edge of the little opening, to Uncle John poking about under a thick branching spruce. "There's where the sneak slept," he said, pointing to a thick-laid bed of spruce branches. "And he has quilts: there's a wad of cotton from one of them; and over there close to the creek is his fireplace."

We went to it, within a few feet of the creek, and found around it the end of a ham bone, several empty cans, and a pair of tattered socks. The ashes of the fireplace and several half-burned sticks in it were water-soaked.

Hunting the Deserter

"Yes, the bird sure has flown!" Uncle John repeated.

"It was he who frightened the deer and turkeys! He has gone west! Over on the other slope! But we did n't see him cross the bare ridgetop —"

"What is all this? Explain," Uncle John interrupted. And when I had told him all about it, he said: "Sure it was he who scared them; but he never crossed the ridge, there in the open: he crossed farther south, where it is well timbered. Come. I'll bet we can find his tracks going up the canyon."

We did find them, almost at once, on the other side of the grass park and going up the canyon, and wondered why he had left this place, where he could live comfortably upon his stealings from me, and for what place he was heading?

"Why, that is easily explained," said Hannah. "He came up on top last night, found that we had moved all our food up to the lookout, and knew that his stealing had been discovered and it was time for him to go."

"He will not starve; he will rob the cattlemen's

In the Great Apache Forest

camp, over on the Reservation, of everything he needs. You must 'phone over there about him as soon as the line is working. Well, back we go! Gee! I'm mad! Your Uncle Cleve and all the others, over there doing their best against the Huns, and this low-down coward sneaking about here in the forest, feeding his worthless carcass with our good grub! Well, maybe we'll get him yet!" Uncle John exclaimed.

We had no more than arrived at the cabin and sat down to get our breath after the long climb, when the two telephone linemen came in sight down the trail, and I asked Uncle John to say nothing to them, nor others, about my cave find. I wanted it all to myself.

"Well, boy," one of them said to me, as they dismounted, "you can ring up the office now; the line's working. We found the break not three hundred yards below here. Not a break, either: the wire had been cut! Cut with a couple of rocks, it appeared like! Now, who in thunder could have done that?"

Hunting the Deserter

"Henry King! Deserter! Grub thief!" we cried.

Uncle John began explaining about him, and I went in to the telephone and did the like to the Supervisor, in Springerville, who said that he would ask the Indian agent on the Reservation to order his Apache police out in search for King. Neither the police nor the sheriff's posse on our side had been able to find the I.W.W. firebugs, and it was hoped that they had left the country. However, I was to remain at the lookout from sunrise to sunset until further orders.

Uncle John was in a hurry to go home and insisted that Hannah return with him. But, first, he and the linemen brought my things at the lookout back to the cabin, packing them down on their horses in one trip. Hannah left her bed roll with me. She would soon be up to help me explore the cave, she said.

So, at about four o'clock, I was again alone on the summit of Mount Thomas. And lonely enough I was. More lonely still when I went down to the cabin in the dusk, cooked and hurriedly ate my

In the Great Apache Forest

supper, and tumbled into bed. And thought about Henry King. Why had he cut the telephone wire? Was it that he intended to make one last grand raid upon our supplies, and wanted to make sure that we should have no chance to report him before he could get well away from Mount Thomas? Yes, that was probably the explanation.

And there was all that wall chinking to be mudded — what time would I ever have to do that?

At three-thirty, the next morning, I had my breakfast, and then, by the light of a small fire that I built outside, I mixed mud and slammed it into the spaces, smoothed it with a strip of box cover and soon after dawn completed the task. I washed the mud off my hands, washed the breakfast dishes, prepared a lunch, took up my rifle, and, locking the door behind me, hurried up the trail to the lookout. The sun was just rising. A heavy bank of clouds was low in the southern sky. I looked out upon the great forest: nowhere was there even a wisp of smoke. Five mule deer were slowly feeding

Hunting the Deserter

down the bare ridge between the White River forks. I watched them with the glasses until they entered the heavy timber that clothes all but the upper end of the ridge. The bucks had funny stubs of growing antlers; not until September would they get their full growth of branching prongs.

The belt of black clouds kept creeping up from the south, and at eight o'clock the first electric storm of the season struck Mount Thomas. With the first boom of it I was out of the lookout and running down the trail to the cabin. Terrible thunder crashed and echoed down into the deep canyons, and the whole summit of the mountain was one glare of lightning; blinding, zigzag lightning that struck the rocks time and again and tore them apart. Capped with a four-prong lightning rod though it was, I felt sure that the lookout would be destroyed. Only little rain came with the storm, but I was shivering with cold when I got into the cabin and built a fire in the stove.

At nine o'clock I 'phoned the office, reported the storm, and was told to return to the lookout

In the Great Apache Forest

as soon as it ceased, for the lightning had probably started some fires. Now and then the rain beat upon the iron roof of the cabin with a deafening noise, but upon opening the door and looking out, I saw that the showers were but slight, wind-driven drizzles, not heavy enough to wet the ground. I returned to the summit in the last of them, the thunder and lightning having ceased, and upon emerging from the spruces, saw that the lookout had survived the storm. For seven years it had stood there, beaten by the fierce winter winds, shaken by the thunderstorms of summer, and though lightning had several times come into it along the wire and smashed the telephone, it had never been directly struck. I hurried up into it, looked north, south, east, and west, and discovered the smoke of three fires: one away down in the Blue Range, and two on the Indian reservation, in the direction of Fort Apache. I reported them.

For eight days I kept those sunrise to sunset hours upon the summit, and during that time no

Hunting the Deserter

one came near me, nor had I to report any new fires. I spent some time each day collecting beads and arrow-points close around the lookout, but did not once visit my cave hole. My mother and sister called me up from Riverside Station — still without a ranger — to learn how I was standing my lonely watch and long hours. I frequently listened in at the telephone and heard bits of news about the war, I.W.W. troubles at Globe and other mining camps, and the doings of the men in the Forest Service. Many of these men had girls in the different mountain settlements, and after hours would talk with them over the 'phone. And such silliness they talked. It was sickening.

"Hello; that you, Laura? That you?" Bill would say.

"Yes, it's me. How you getting along, Bill?"

"All right. How you getting along?"

"All right."

A long pause. Bill trying to think of something to say. And then:

"Say, Laura, what you going to do Sunday?"

In the Great Apache Forest

"Nothing. What you going to do?"

"Nothing." Both titter, and I wonder what there is in that to laugh about? Another long pause, and Bill says:

"You ain't going to do anything Sunday, Laura?"

"No. Wish't I was."

"Wish't I was, too." And both laugh again.

"Well, I guess I got to go take care of my horse. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Bill."

And then says some one listening in: "Oh, good-bye, Bill, dear, sweet Bill!"

On the eighth day, Saturday, of my sixteen-hour watches, the Supervisor telephoned me that the I.W.W. firebugs had evidently left the forest, so I could resume my usual hours in the lookout. That meant that I could leave the lookout at four o'clock, sun time, and so have four hours of daylight for exploring my cave find. I called Riverside Station, hoping that some one would be there to take word to my sister that I wanted

Hunting the Deserter

her to come up, but got no answer. The next morning, however, my mother went to the station and called me, to learn if I was safe and well, and after a lot of persuading, I got her to consent to Hannah spending a few days with me. A little later in the day, Hannah came to the 'phone and asked if I had been down into the cave hole?

"Have n't been near it since you were here," I answered.

"Good! Promise that you will keep away from it until I come. You promise. Then I'll be with you to-morrow afternoon."

What with the big food chest, the stove, table, stools, and all, there was no space in the little cabin for a second bunk, nor a bed upon the floor, so, after quitting time that evening, I made a sleeping-place for myself out on the south side of the cabin: a pole bunk with a foot of springy spruce boughs in it, and a canvas pack cover for a roof. Hannah could have the cabin all to herself during the nights. With old Double Killer prowling around upon the mountain, and maybe worse than

In the Great Apache Forest

he, I just did n't want to sleep out there. When bedtime came, and I stepped out for a last look around, the very thought of sleeping outside of my four well-chinked walls made me shiver. That made me plumb mad at myself. Did n't Uncle John and all our other mountain men often sleep out, with never a thought that harm could come to them? Sure they did, and I would, too. I brought my bedding out and spread it upon my bough mattress, and got under the covers with my rifle at my side. I found then that I had made my canvas roof too low: it prevented me seeing anything more than ten feet off. I got up and raised it, and lay down again. That was better. I could see all of the little clearing in three directions; the cabin, of course, shut off the north side of it. There was now a good moon; it enabled me to see even into some of the shadows cast by the spruces. I sat up, aimed my rifle at a stump sticking up in the east end of the clearing, and could see it quite well through the sights; was sure that I could put a bullet into it. Sleeping out was n't so

Hunting the Deserter

bad, after all. I lay back upon my pillow, intending to watch the clearing for a time and learn if any night prowlers were about — and the first thing I knew it was morning! I had slept well; better than in the cabin. I sprang up and began my daily round of tasks, glad that Hannah would soon be with me to explore my cave find.

I had a hurried breakfast, put everything in the cabin in good order, and started up the trail to the lookout. When halfway there, I came upon the tracks of a bear that had passed down the trail during the night. Not old Double Killer, but a bear of good size — a grizzly, as I could tell by the imprint of his long claws in the soft earth. And staring down at them, maybe I shivered a bit. If he had come nosing around under my bunk what would have happened? Try as I would to forget it, that unpleasant thought was with me, on and off, all day.

From the lookout I could see no fire anywhere, but shortly after I had made my nine o'clock report, I heard Green's Peak lookout 'phone the

In the Great Apache Forest

officer about two fires to the west of him, and a half-hour later he reported a third fire, still farther west. Then, still listening in, I heard him and the Supervisor agree that the I.W.W. firebugs were probably the cause of them. My call rang. I was asked to try to find the fires, give a chart reading of them. I replied that I could see no smoke in that direction; that Green's Peak and the high ridge south of it were the limit of my view of the forest to the west. Listening in again, I heard the Supervisor order out the various patrols to fight the fires, and tell them that he would again get a sheriff's posse to try to help them locate the fire-setters. All this made me feel very blue. I could not understand why some men were so mean!

When I went down to the cabin, at noon, there was Hannah, and old Mr. Ames, who had brought her up on his way to his summer cattle range down on Blue River. He had lunch with us, and got very angry when I told him about the new forest fires. "I'll tell you what is what," he said. "Our forefathers fought and bled for this great country,

Hunting the Deserter

and now we are fighting for it again. And sooner or later, we here at home have just got to get together and wipe out the I.W.W., and other Hun helpers!”

Hannah and I helped him get his pack-horses onto the trail, and he turned back down the mountain, still talking about the firebugs. We then went up to the lookout, taking with us a candle and a rope, and on the way I cut a number of two-foot lengths of stout spruce boughs, and a pole of about six feet. During the afternoon I made a rope ladder of these, first cutting the long rope in its center, and tying the lengths to the pole, about a foot apart. Then came, at last, five o'clock — by sun time four o'clock, and taking a last look over the forest for fires, and glad that we had none to report, we hurried down along the summit to the cave.

I had planned just how we were to get down into the cave hole, and back up. I let the ladder down until it touched the projecting ledge, and had about six feet of it to spare, the end tied to

In the Great Apache Forest

the pole. This I laid upon the slope straight back from the edge, and weighted with slab after slab of rock from the half-circle pile, most of the weight resting upon the end pole. Not even our combined weight, I well knew, could pull the ladder end from under the pile. Hannah went down first, and I was soon beside her upon the rock ledge. Right at our feet, and for the whole length of the ledge, gaped the cleft, running straight down into dense blackness, down, perhaps, into the very heart of the great mountain, and in places covered over with rock slabs that had either fallen from above or — as appeared more likely — been laid upon it by the old-time people with the intent to conceal it. At our right, at the end of the ledge, the hole running on into the mountain was much larger than it had appeared to be from above; large enough to admit us, one at a time, upon hands and knees. Before going to it, we dropped several pieces of good-sized rock into the cleft; each one of them clattered down into the darkness for a considerable time, proving that the cleft was of



FOUND OUR WAY BLOCKED BY A LARGE THREE-CORNERED
SLAB OF ROCK

Hunting the Deserter

great depth. Had any one ever gone down there, and lived to get safely back up into the light? we wondered.

I led along the ledge to the cave hole, Hannah closely following, and got down upon hands and knees, lit the candle, and looked in. The passage sloped downward at an angle of about twenty degrees. The floor was strewn with earth and rock bits; the walls were smooth-edged layers of rock of varying thickness up to about eight inches; the roof was uneven.

"Can't you go in?" Hannah asked, behind me.

"Yes, we can crawl into the hole, as far as I can see," I answered.

"Well, lead on, then! I just can't wait to see what is down there!" she exclaimed.

We crept down in for about ten feet, and found our way blocked by a large, three-cornered slab of roof rock that, in falling, had wedged between the walls. I took hold of it, shook it, gave the candle to Hannah, and with both hands and all my strength failed to free it. In falling, it had cut into

In the Great Apache Forest

projections of both walls, and there it would stick until I could get a crowbar and pry and batter it loose. Hannah all but cried when I told her that. I took the candle from her, and held it in over the top of the slab, and saw that, only a few feet ahead, the passage ran into a large chamber. I could see something like ten feet of its floor; beyond was black darkness. Upon the floor was a dim, dust-covered object that had the outline of a large, bottle-neck olla. Yes, I made out that it was an olla. I told Hannah what I saw and we sure were excited. Doubtless there were a number of ollas in the chamber, we said. And other things, too. Gold, maybe. Weapons and implements of the old-time people. In withdrawing the candle I glanced up at the roof and saw the three-cornered place from which the slab had fallen. It was white, almost, compared with the rest of the dark, time-stained roof. The slab had but recently fallen. What was recent, in this underground place? I wondered. Perhaps that bright place would not become the color of the rest of the roof in a thousand years!

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE-OF-PEACE

AGAIN I handed Hannah the candle, and shook the rock slab; lay down and kicked it, and could not budge it. "Lead out. We can never move it without a crowbar," I said.

We were about halfway back to the entrance of the passage when Hannah paused, sat up, and from a projection of the wall close up under the roof secured a handful of sticks averaging about six inches in length and a half-inch in diameter, and we saw at once, by the dim light of the candle, that they were not just sticks, the pilings of a rat nest: all were notched in at one end, and several had carved ends, and to the head of one of them a few downy, tiny feathers adhered, as though stuck on with glue. We found a few more of the sticks at the back of the little shelf — eighteen in all, and then noticed that the floor was covered with the dust of similar sticks that had rotted, except here

In the Great Apache Forest

and there an end, and they crumbled into gray powder between our fingers. We went on with our finds, out upon the ledge, and up the ladder. We then saw that the sticks had been banded with paint, some with three colors: white at the top or carved end, blue in the center, and then black. Others had bands of one color; still others just a band of black at the lower end. We sat there upon the rocks a long time, examining them, wondering for what purpose they had been made. At last Hannah insisted that they had been children's toys; dolls, or pieces for some kind of a game. Somehow I did not think that explained them. The sun was now near setting. We put our rock ladder weights back on the pile below, and took ladder and sticks down to the cabin. No trace was left, there on top, of our descent into the cave hole. Days would elapse before we could get a crowbar up from home, and in the meantime we did not intend to give chance visitors a lead to our find. Every summer tourists came up on the mountain for a view of the great forest and the

The People-of-Peace

desert stretching north from it. It was time for some to be coming, so we hid the ladder and the queer sticks under Hannah's bunk. That would save us answering questions about them.

The night passed without incident. I awoke at dawn, as usual, and looked up and down the clearing, stared into the spruce thickets; saw nothing but a couple of blue jays fighting a squirrel away from the tree in which they had their nests. I laughed at myself: I had gone to bed determined to watch a long time for the grizzly whose tracks I had seen, to watch for him on and off all through the night, and I had fallen asleep not five minutes after getting under the covers, and had not once awakened. I got up and dressed, called Hannah, and went to the spring. Sister objected to getting up so early, and I had to threaten her with a bucket of the icy water. I was anxious to go up on top and see if more fires had been started during the night.

We were in the lookout before seven o'clock, and how glad we were when we failed to see smoke in any direction. I made my report to the office a

In the Great Apache Forest

few minutes before nine, and then, listening in, learned that the fires west of Green's Peak had been put out. The patrol told the Supervisor, however, that he was sure they had been started by firebugs, for each one was in very thick timber where it would have done great damage if a strong wind had come up. The patrols were worn out by their all-day and all-night work, and the Supervisor told them to sleep; that he would not call them until he had to, for the sheriff's men and the Indian police were all out searching for the firebugs. He then called me, and said that I could leave the lookout at five o'clock, but wanted me to return to it for a few minutes, just before sunset, and make a last report.

We put in most of the day looking for beads and collected nearly two hundred — and a few arrow-points — all close around the lookout. We had doubtless scraped out several hundred more that, in the mixture of dark earth and fine gravel, had escaped our eyes. It was as if they had been poured upon the little butte, thousands and thou-

The People-of-Peace

sands of them in the long ago, for undoubtedly the terrific winds and the beating rains and the melting snows had carried immense numbers down the mountain-sides, and still plenty were to be found on top. Why, why had they been deposited there by the ancient people? we kept asking, until our minds were all in a whirl.

Said Hannah, along in the afternoon: "I've just got to quit the search or I shall go blind. Oh, well, just this one short crevice, and then no more for to-day."

A moment later she cried out: "Come here! Quick! See what I have found!"

It was a find: inlaid, upon an oval, whitish substance about three inches long, were pieces of turquoise, close en-joined, in the form of a frog, and held in place with something that looked like black gum. Close above the head of the frog was a hole in the white substance, evidently for the purpose of attaching the piece to a necklace. It was a fine piece of workmanship.

"It was a woman's jewel, and how proud she

In the Great Apache Forest

must have been of it!" Hannah exclaimed. "Any woman would be glad to wear it. I shall wear it, myself, as soon as I can get a necklace for it!"

"Yes, it is beautiful," I said. "And if those old-time jewelers could do that fine work, they did it in gold, too. When we get into our cave we sure shall make some wonderful finds!"

At five o'clock I reported "No fires," and we went down to the cabin, put our finds in a little box — already half full of beads and arrow-points, and then had a good supper. After washing the dishes and getting in some stove wood for the evening and morning, we again went on top. Again I reported no smoke anywhere in sight.

"Look again; especially Green's Peak way," said the Supervisor.

"No smoke that way, nor in any other direction," I told him, after another careful sweep of the forest with my glasses, and he told me that I could go.

It was just getting dusk when we entered the cabin, shut the door, lighted the lamp, and settled

The People-of-Peace

down for an hour of reading. Then, presently, there came a gentle knock upon the door, and we stared at one another, wild-eyed, for we had heard not the slightest sound of approaching footsteps; the porch boards had not creaked. Hannah motioned me not to go to the door. But again, and a little louder, came the knocking. I got up, tiptoed over to the door with my rifle, swung it suddenly open, and Hannah gave a little cry of fright: for there, plain in the light of our lamp, stood an Indian. A young Indian. No Apache. His hair was cut as short as mine. He wore leggins, shirt, blanket of a bluish-black material, and upon his feet a pair of plain, buckskin moccasins. He was not so tall as I, quite slender, and his face was good. And while we stared at him, he smiled, bowed, and in good English said: "How do you do! May I come in?"

That did stagger me — a blanket Indian speaking good English! I am afraid that I just stared at him, open-mouthed. And I might have kept staring had not Hannah answered for me: "Yes. Come in. Have a seat."

In the Great Apache Forest

He entered, seated himself upon the food chest, glanced around, and said: "You have a nice little cabin here. We did not expect there would be a cabin, nor white people away up on this great mountain."

"We? There are more of you?" I asked.

"Yes. I am a Hopi. I am with four of our old men who have come all the long way across the desert to the top of this mountain to pray."

"To pray! Here to pray?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered shortly, and somehow we did not like to question him further about that.

"Will you not have some supper?" Hannah said.

"No, thank you. I ate with my old men. And, anyhow, I may not eat white men's food — not until that for which my old men have come is finished."

We did not know what to make of that. We could do nothing but stare at him.

Said Hannah, at last: "You speak English as well as we do."

The People-of-Peace

"I attended the Phoenix Indian School for four years, and was in the Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Indian School for four more years. I came home from there about two months ago," he answered.

And at that, Hannah and I had the same thought: This young Indian had had far greater advantages than we had ever dreamed of having. He had traveled in the cars; seen the great cities of the East and their millions of people; seen the ocean and big ships: and for eight years had attended good schools. Why, what we knew was as nothing, compared with his knowledge!

"You must have enjoyed attending school," I said.

"I had no choice about it. The Government forces us to attend its schools. Oh, how my people hate that!" he exclaimed, his eyes fairly flashing light. And then, more quietly: "And you two — why are you away up here?"

I explained that I was a fireguard, and that my sister was keeping me company for a time; that there was a little lookout house upon the

In the Great Apache Forest

summit where I passed the days, watching for fires and reporting those that I discovered. When I had finished, he nodded thoughtfully, and said: "We were surprised when we saw your cabin. I do not know what my old men will say when they learn that you also have a cabin up on the summit of the mountain; it may interfere with their plans."

"Where are they? And what did you do with your horses?" Hannah asked.

"When we saw your cabin, here, we turned back and camped a little way below the spring. We brought no horses. We have come all the way on foot, just as our fathers did, hundreds and hundreds of years ago," he replied.

"Oh, tell us! Do tell us why you and your old men are here! We want so much to know!" Hannah begged, smiling at him.

He looked steadily at her, at me, too, for some time, and finally said: "I think that you are both of good heart. You will not believe as we do, but I feel sure you will not laugh at our beliefs, so I

The People-of-Peace

will tell you why we have come to this great mountain:

“For three summers, out there at our desert buttes, there has been but little rain; each summer my people’s harvest of corn and beans and squash has been less and less, and they have been obliged to use nearly all that remained of the harvests of better years. Then came this summer and no rain at all, and our priests said: ‘We have prayed and prayed Rain God for three summers to water our crops, to give us plenty of his rain, lest we starve. He may be angry at us — perhaps he has been far away and has not heard our prayers; if he fails us this season we must many of us die from want of food. There remains but one thing for us to do: we must go to him at his high mountain home and there he cannot fail to hear our prayers and see the sacrifices that we make to him.

“Our people were anxious that the priests should do this. Away back, in the very long ago, when, every spring, the priests and great numbers

In the Great Apache Forest

of the men, women, and children went to the high mountain home of Rain God to pray and sacrifice to him, there had been never a summer of poor crops, for Rain God had accepted their offerings and their prayers and plentifully watered the plantings.”

Our strange visitor paused. He had spoken forcefully, earnestly, and now seemed to be deeply considering what more to tell us, if indeed we were in his thoughts. His eyes now had a far-away, absent look. Hannah and I waited breathlessly for him to continue. This talk of Rain God, prayers and sacrifices upon high mountains — it was all strange in our ears; it was as though we were being introduced to another world.

“All of our priests, all of our tribe, were anxious to make this journey. But there were the missionaries, talking ever against what they call our ‘heathen practices’! they would make such outcry to our agent, they have so much influence in Washington, that he would not dare permit us all to go: those who went would have to start off

The People-of-Peace

in the night; they would have to sneak out across the desert just as though they were escaping thieves! So, after much talk, four priests were chosen to take the trail — the ancient trail of our long-ago fathers to Rain God's home, and I was selected to accompany them as their interpreter, because I in time — when I have learned all that the old men can teach me — I, myself, shall be a priest of our faith, a priest of the Flute Clan.

“It was decided that, as our fathers in the long ago approached Rain God, so should these four priests go to him; they should wear no clothing and carry no article of white men's make, and during the journey eat no white men's food. Why? Because, as some of our priests said, it was likely that Rain God was punishing us for allowing our children to be taught the white men's religion; was withholding his rains because of that. As though we could help that! The white men do as they wish with us and our children, and we are powerless. Anyhow, if the four priests went to Rain God without the least taint of anything of the

In the Great Apache Forest

whites within them or upon their persons — why, then how could the great god refuse their prayers for rain?

“So it was that, after days of preparation and much prayer, we started out one night upon the ancient trail to this mountain, the trail that had not been used by our people for years and years, almost a hundred years. Of those who had last traveled it but few had returned: our terrible enemies, the Apaches, had killed the most of the men, and captured nearly all of the women and children. And it is not without fear of the Apaches that we are here, weaponless. We could not carry white men’s rifles — offensive to Rain God — nor bows because we no longer have arrow-points of flint and have lost the art of making them. Tell me: do you ever see Apaches, here upon this mountain?”

“No, I have n’t seen any of them up here,” I told him. “They are not allowed to have guns, and are pretty well guarded by the soldiers, four companies of cavalry at Fort Apache, sixty miles from here.”

The People-of-Peace

"But some of them do have guns, I have heard."

"Yes. They manage to keep a few hidden from the soldiers, and now and then sneak away from their agency to hunt deer."

"Just deer?" he asked, meaningly.

"Well, some white men have been found in these mountains, murdered in a horrible manner," I answered.

"Of course! The Apaches are happy only when they are torturing people to death!" he exclaimed.

"The Apaches and the Navajos, what have n't they done to us!" he went on. "We were not always just a few people living out there on the cliffs in the middle of the great desert, and depending upon the rains for the growing of our crops. No! We were a people of thousands and thousands, living far south in the Red Earth country; the Giant Cactus country; and our name then was as it is now, People-of-Peace. We lived in large, many-roomed, two- and three-stories high pueblos that we built in the wide valleys, and from the rivers we brought plenty of water in wide, deep

In the Great Apache Forest

ditches for our plantings. All up and down those valleys and far out upon the desert were our green growing crops of corn, beans, squash, sugar-cane, tobacco, and cotton. We were rich! Rich and happy, we People-of-Peace!

“But that was not to last. Years and years before the first white men came —”

“We know who they were: the Spanish *conquistador*, Coronado, and his little band of soldiers. They came into this country in 1540,” Hannah interrupted.

“Yes. And they were the bearers of more misfortune to us! But as I was going to say: Years and years before their time came down upon us new and terrible enemies, the Apaches, and their brothers, the Navajos. They murdered us in our fields; waylaid and wiped out our hunting parties; destroyed our crops; and at last forced us to abandon our broad, rich, irrigated valleys and move north into the mountains, where, in the cliffs of the deep canyons, we built our homes. There, too, the Apaches and the Navajos kept attacking us. Our

The People-of-Peace

numbers became less and less, until, at last, the few who survived moved far out into the desert and built homes, there where we are to-day. Even there our enemies occasionally came, but they could not force their way up the steep and narrow trails to our pueblos, and so were unable to make an end to us.

“So, there you have the story of my people,” our visitor concluded, his voice dropping almost to a whisper, the fire of bitter anger dying in his eyes.

“But you spoke of more wrongs done you by Coronado. What of him?” Hannah asked.

“Yes. He whom my people named ‘Hard-Clothing Chief.’ Because, of course, he wore shirt, leggins, and hat of iron, and his men, too. But I cannot tell you about him now; my old men are anxious for my return to them. But you shall know about Coronado, for we remain here four days. Good-night to you.”

He went out, carefully closing the door behind him, and Hannah and I felt as though we had

In the Great Apache Forest

been in another world. How much the young Indian knew! What a tale of terrible persecution of his people he had told us! More than ever we hated and feared the Apaches, so close to us down there on the south slope! And well we knew that if they discovered our visitor and his four old men, there would be murder right here upon our mountain. How the Apaches would delight in taking — at this late day — five more scalps of the Hopi people!

We had no more thought of reading, that night; what we had just learned was far more interesting than anything we could get from the printed page. Said Hannah, as I prepared to go outside to my bunk: "I know that I should feel that this we have heard about Rain God and his home here upon this mountain, is nothing but a crazy heathen tale, but I just can't do it. I feel — oh, I can't explain how I feel. I am all mixed up in my mind!"

I said nothing. But as I lay in my bunk waiting for sleep, my heart went out to the persecuted People-of-Peace, and to the four old men down at

The People-of-Peace

our spring, resting from their long tramp across the hot and dusty desert, and firm in the belief that their Rain God would answer the prayers they were about to make to him here upon this storm-swept peak.

I awoke a little later than usual, and after calling Hannah, took the trail to the spring for a bucket of water. As I neared it I heard a deep, pleasant voice fervently making what seemed to be an address. I rounded a clump of spruces and stopped short: in a row by a little fire sat our visitor of the evening and three of his old men. The fourth one stood upon the lower side of the fire, with uplifted hands, talking impassionedly on and on, and I sensed at once that he was addressing the rising sun. I noiselessly drew back into the spruces, waited until he ceased speaking, and then went on down. The young Hopi called out a "good-morning" to me, and said something to the old men, and they one by one shook my hand, he who had addressed the sun saying, as the young interpreter told me: "We heard about you

In the Great Apache Forest

last night. It is good that you keep watch for the putters-out-of-fires, down below: the trees love life as well as we do."

Said another: "We learn that you have a little house upon the top of this mountain. Tell us just where it is."

"Right upon the top of a little rock butte at the south end of the summit," I answered. And when that had been turned into their language they looked solemnly, meaningly at one another, and talked together for a moment or two, the youth listening intently to what they said. Meantime, I looked at them, and thought that I had never seen more kindly, intelligent faces, seamed and leathery with age though they were. All wore their gray hair cut square just above their shoulders and held in place with a narrow band of buckskin, and their clothing was just like that of the youth, of blue-black, homespun wool. Under a tree near the fire were a number of buckskin sacks of different size and well filled — probably with food, I thought. Close in front of the fire were five small

The People-of-Peace

bowls of painted pottery, much like the pottery fragments strewn about my cave hole, and the lookout butte.

One of the old men soon questioned me again, and all of them listened eagerly, breathlessly, I thought, to my answers.

"You have been all over the top of this mountain?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"Up there near the north end of it and a little way down on the other slope, did you see a hole in the rock?"

"Yes."

"Did you go down into it?"

"Yes," I answered again. And when the youth had interpreted my reply they suddenly seemed to wilt: they groaned as though in great pain; and the young interpreter looked at me reproachfully.

"But I went in only a little way; the hole is blocked with a piece of fallen roof rock," I added. And at that the youth clapped his hands and shouted, "Good! Good!" to me, and when he

In the Great Apache Forest

told the old men what I had said, they straightened up and smiled at me, talking excitedly all four at once.

“It is that they are glad you did not go in there. That cave is Rain God’s kiva, or as you would call it, church. It is only for him, and for certain ones of our priests, these four. Had you gone into it, it would have been desecrated. I, myself, may not go into it, for I am but a student, as you may say. The priests teach me a few of the secrets, and watch me always to see how I conduct myself — oh, it will be a long time before I am made a full priest.”

“Can’t you tell me what there is in the cave — the kiva, as you call it?”

“I know no more than you what is hidden there, and if I did know, would not dare name the sacred things,” he answered.

I turned from him to fill my bucket at the spring and just then heard Hannah screaming out my name.

CHAPTER VI

THE WRONGS OF THE HOPIS

I DROPPED my bucket and started up the trail as fast as I could go, and as a runner found that I was nothing: with a few leaps the young Hopi and his four old priests were ahead of me, leaving me, snatching up here and there a stone as they ran. After Hannah's cry of "George! George! Come quick!" we heard her no more. Something terrible had happened to her, I was sure. It was but a little way — a hundred yards — to the little clearing on top of the ridge. As I came into it, well behind the others, I saw that the cabin door was closed. Hannah's cry for help had been in the open, or we should not have heard it so plainly, if at all. I believed that she had gone out into the timber; that she had been suddenly overpowered there by some one, or, maybe, Double Killer, or she would have kept calling me. I was in a terrible state of mind. And then, what relief! The cabin door swung

In the Great Apache Forest

open and she came running to us, pistol in one hand, my rifle in the other.

"I went out in there," she cried, as I took the weapon from her, "—out into those spruces for dry twigs to start the fire, and a man was lying there. He sprang up, and I turned and ran to the cabin, screaming for you, and got inside and barred the door. Oh, how frightened I was! I was sure the man would catch me before I could get to the cabin!"

"He chased you?" I cried.

"When he sprang up he came straight toward me. How far he followed I don't know. I did n't dare look back. I just kept running until I got inside, and when I turned to shut and bar the door he was not in sight."

"But you saw him! Was he white, or an Apache?"

"I don't know. It was all so dim in there, the branches were so thick that I did n't get a good look at him. I did n't have time to look at him: I had to run!" she answered.

I did n't know what to say to this. I sure was

The Wrongs of the Hopis

mad. Not afraid, though; I just wanted to get sight of any one who would chase my sister.

The young Hopi had been telling his priests what we were saying, and one of them now asked: "Have you any enemies?"

"There are some bad men in the forest," I answered, and went on to tell them about the deserter, who, we believed, had stolen our food, and about the I.W.W. firebugs. And when I had finished, one of the old men spoke to the others in a low, sad voice.

"What did he say?" I asked the interpreter.

"These were his words," he solemnly replied: "'Whites, Apaches, Navajos, all of the tribes we know, are murderers, thieves, liars! We alone are People-of-Peace. We do no wrong to any of them, yet how they make us suffer!'"

Now, what answer could we make to that? None. It was true. Hannah and I stood ashamed before those gentle old men. Not for ourselves, but for those of our kind who were mean to them.

"Well, let us all try to learn who was the man in

In the Great Apache Forest

the timber, whether Apache or white," the young Hopi proposed.

"But your old men have no weapons — they will be afraid to go in there," I said.

He spoke to them and they all nodded assent, gripping more tightly the rocks they held. We went across the clearing and into the spruces, and Hannah showed us just where she had seen the man. Under the low-branching tree the dead needles were packed as though he had lain there a long time; all night, perhaps. Along the way that he had chased her, only a few yards, the needles were only slightly pressed by his footsteps. We cut a circle around the place; then a larger one, and, down on the slope of the ridge, one of the old men called us to him and pointed to tracks in a bare stretch of ground; broad-heel shoetracks far apart, leading down into the canyon. I needed but one look at them: "The deserter! He is back again!" I said to Hannah. She did not answer; she just shivered a bit as though she were cold. I explained to the others that I knew the tracks; that they were made

The Wrongs of the Hopis

by the man who had camped down in the canyon, and several times stolen our food.

"It is well for us that he was n't an Apache, to come again with a lot of his people to take our scalps and dance over our bodies," one of the old men remarked.

"Sister, this sure does settle it! I can't fireguard all day and watch all night for this thieving deserter! I am going to call for help," I said.

"Don't you do it!" she cried. "I am not afraid, now. If I had had my pistol when I first came out, you would have heard my shot instead of my scream for help."

"No! Don't call people up here; I will help you, stand watch nights for you," the young Hopi pleaded. "With you two, we feel at ease; we know that your hearts are right. But with a lot of white men up here, laughing, sneering at us, oh, my old men could not do that they have come so far to do. To fail now would just about kill them!"

"All right! All right! We'll just go on as we are," I told him.

In the Great Apache Forest

Our Hopi friends, of course, refused to eat with us. They would go back to the spring for a time, they said. Hannah and I had a hurried breakfast and a silent one. Just before seven o'clock, while we were washing the dishes, the telephone rang my call, rang it twice before I could get to the receiver, and when I answered, my ear ached with the Supervisor's shout: "Big fire somewhere near the sawmill! Go up top as fast as you can leg it, and report!"

"Yes! Right away!" I shouted back. Hannah had heard him as plainly as I. "Oh, the firebugs again! And the wind blowing! This is terrible!" she cried, flinging the dishcloth upon its nail and stuffing some bread and things into our lunch sack, and her pistol into the holster at her hip.

We locked the door behind us, although that was almost useless; without doubt Henry King had a key to fit the lock. I had noticed as well as Hannah that there was a stiff southwest wind, and had hoped that there was no fire in the forest for it to spread. As we neared the top of the trail it blew

The Wrongs of the Hopis

stronger, and, once we were clear of the spruces, it was that hard we had to lean against it the rest of the way up to the lookout.

We scrambled up into the little house, and I swung the chart sight onto the fire, and stepping across to the telephone, gave the Supervisor the degree.

"The firebugs again! Describe it!" he shouted.

"Set in four places in a line of maybe a mile north and south, and spreading fast! The sky that way is black with smoke!" I thought that I heard him swear as he hung up.

For a time Hannah and I by turns watched the fire with the glasses, and now and then could see the awful red flames break skyward up through the rolling black blanket of smoke. With the aid of the strong wind, the I.W.W. firebugs were at last carrying out their threat. If they did not succeed in burning the sawmill, they were anyhow destroying the great firs and pines that it was to turn into lumber, and it would have to be moved — at great expense — to another locality. I tell you that we

In the Great Apache Forest

sure felt bad, watching that wicked burning of our beautiful forest. And the meanness of it! Out there in the great world, why were people so mean? Why were they always fighting, stealing, doing everything that was mean to one another?

We presently saw the Hopis coming up on the summit, and said Hannah: "I thought that I could never like Indians, but they are different. I just love those Hopi Indians, those People-of-Peace, because, George, they are just like us, here in these little mountain settlements. We do no wrong to one another, nor to outsiders. Why can't all the world be like us?"

"You've sure got me! All I know is that they just can't be good, and that is all there is to it. I don't want to think about it any more, it makes me sick."

The Hopis came on to the foot of the lookout butte and we went down, and asked them up into our little house. They shook their heads. No, they would not go up. By putting the house there, the whites had spoiled their once sacred ground. One

The Wrongs of the Hopis

of them took up two or three pottery fragments that lay scattered at his feet, examined them, held them out in our view, and told the young Hopi that he was going to say a few words to us.

“White children of good heart,” he began, “these are pieces of beautiful ollas left here by our People-of-Peace. They have lain here in the rain and snow and sun a long time, some of them hundreds of years, but you see that they are still smooth, and the different colors of paint as bright as the day the maker put them on. Yes, the pottery of our long-ago people was far better made, the painted figures upon it far more beautiful than our women of to-day can make. But perhaps you are not interested in this.”

“Oh, yes! We are interested! Tell us all about it!” Hannah replied.

“Then let us get out of the wind,” the interpreter said, and led us around to the east side of the butte. But, first, one of the old men pointed off to the great fire and asked: “That is the work of the bad white men you spoke of?”

In the Great Apache Forest

"Yes. They are trying to burn a little sawmill off there, as well as the forest," I answered; and he sadly shook his head. Hannah and I sure stood ashamed before the old men; ashamed that they should know how mean were some of our own kind!

We sat down in a little circle, close at the edge of the butte, and the old man continued his tale:

"None of us four have ever been here upon this sacred mountain, nor were our fathers, nor our grandfathers ever here; it was long before their time that our people were obliged to give up their every-spring journeys here to Rain God's home. But just as though we had been of that long-ago time, we priests know how the ancient ones made the long journey, just what they did when they arrived here. For three days certain ones of the priests prayed and performed their mysteries in the kiva out there at the other end of the mountain, while their people, hundreds and hundreds of them, camped close down there in the timber, praying, too, and waiting for the great day, the fourth day, to come. Early in the morning of that

The Wrongs of the Hopis

day the people all came up on top, men and women, bringing some of their most valuable things, and little children the toys they most loved, to sacrifice to Rain God. These they placed here and there upon this butte, the very highest point of this highest mountain of all the range, where Rain God loved to sit and look out upon the world, and some they placed around the entrance to his kiva, in which he often performed his great mysteries. And as they set them down upon the rocks they prayed him to accept their poor offerings and to drop his rain plentifully upon their plantings. Men taught their little sons and mothers their little daughters to say those prayers, and guided their little hands in the placing of their toy offerings. Why, in that long-ago time this whole butte was covered with gifts to Rain God: beautiful ollas; bead necklaces; the finest clothing; weapons; children's buzzers, dolls, and other toys.

“Then, on that fourth morning, the priests came up out of the kiva and danced their dance to Rain God, and made him their offerings. And sometimes

In the Great Apache Forest

he answered their prayers at once, right there gathering his clouds around him and then spreading them out until they dropped their water upon the farthest plantings of the people. And if not at once, he later brought his rains to their plantings: in those times there never was a crop failure. No, not even when the Apaches and Navajos came and attacked the prayers for rain right upon the top of this mountain, killing many of them and destroying their offerings.

“No, not even when the Apaches and Navajos finally prevented our ancient ones coming here to pray — not until long after the coming of the first white men did Rain God at times withhold his rains, allow our plantings to die. At first only one summer in ten, or something like that, but of late, very often. And why? Oh, it is not through our fault, we old people; it is because of what the white men have done to our children, things that we, their fathers, are powerless to prevent.

“When, in that long-ago time, our people from the cliffs of Oraibi sighted those first white men

The Wrongs of the Hopis

coming across the desert, all sitting on top of huge, strange animals, they feared them. The priests hurried to bar their way with sacred meal, but they paid no attention to it —”

“Oh, ask him to wait! Tell us about the sacred meal,” I said to the young Hopi.

The old men all patiently smiled assent, and the young Hopi explained:

“Sacred meal. It was corn meal prepared by the priests in their kiva, and was used for several purposes. When a line of it was sprinkled across a trail leading up into one of our villages, it was a warning to all people, all comers, that they were not wanted up on top, and must turn back.”

The old man nodded, and went on.

“Those white men did not even look at the cross-line of sacred meal, nor pay any attention to the priests standing behind it and motioning them back. Instead, they fired their guns and the people fled before them, almost crazy with fear, for they thought that those strange men had thunder and lightning for their weapons.

In the Great Apache Forest

“On they came, right up into Oraibi, those white men, and camped in the houses and searched them and the kivas, into which none but the priests were allowed to descend. Yes, they searched every room in the village and the piles of rock around it, for what the people could not understand. Long afterward they learned that it was for gold. Metal that the Hopi had never seen or heard of. Angry because they had found none of it, they left Oraibi, forced their way into each of our six other villages, and then turned off to the west and were seen no more. The priests purified the kivas. Years passed, and the entrance of the white men into their homes became like a bad dream to the people, and at last it was thought that white skins would never again be seen in Hopi land.

“But, after years and years had passed, more white men did come, and because they seemed to be different from the first who had come, because they carried no weapons wherever they went, and were kind and pleasant-voiced, the people made them welcome; gave them a house to live in, food,

The Wrongs of the Hopis

wood, and the women gladly brought up water for them from the spring at the foot of the cliff. All went well for a time — until the white men learned to speak our language — and then the people learned that they were priests, and trouble began. The Hopi gods were devils, the kivas devils' holes, the white men said, and forbade the Hopi to pray to any but the white god. And at that the Hopi priests seized those white priests, and carried them to the edge of that high cliff of Oraibi and tossed them off from it: they struck the rocks at the bottom and were dead.

“After that happening, our people saw no more white men for years and years. They who came had been Spaniards. Came at last, and in the time of us four here, a different kind of white men; men of very white skin, and at first they did not bother us. They fought the Apaches and the Navajos; put them upon certain lands and made them tame, and of that we were very glad. Then came, not many years ago, one of them who said that he had been sent by the Great Father of the white men to live

In the Great Apache Forest

with us, and teach us the white men's ways; we were no longer to live as we had always lived; we were all of us to follow the white men's trail, on and on, up and up, until we should be just like the white men except for the color of our skins.

"Said our chiefs to him: 'As you came, so may you go, and at once. Tell your Great Father for us that we thank him for his offer of help, but that we do not need it. As we have lived here for hundreds and hundreds of years, so do we intend to live. We ask but one thing of the Great Father, and that is to be let alone.'

"Said the white man: 'The Great Father has ordered me to remain here with you, and here I stay, and as the Great Father has ordered shall be done for you, so shall it be done.'

"What could we do then? Nothing. We had seen the whites tame our terrible enemies and knew that we few, weaponless Hopis could do nothing against them. This white man brought other white men to help him, and there in our own land they

The Wrongs of the Hopis

built houses for themselves, and houses for teaching our children their language and their ways, and houses for their gods. And, worst of all, they said that our children must worship their gods, because the Hopi gods were not. That we had made gods of our idle dreams. They said that our beliefs were all lies; that there was no Under World, from which we came and to which we return when we die. They said that their gods made us, as well as the whites, and that if we would not believe, would not pray as they did, then would we go to a place of terrible fire when we die, and forever burn.

“So it is with us to-day. Oh, how we suffer from seeing our children taken from us and taught these different ways of life! But though they are taught, though under the eyes of their teachers they speak the white men’s prayers, in their hearts the most of them are at the same time praying to our own gods. A few really do believe the teachings of the whites, and in punishing them for it, our gods punish us all. Because of them, strange and terrible diseases carry many of us away. Because of them,

In the Great Apache Forest

Rain God neglects to water our plantings. Oh, we are poor, very poor, we People-of-Peace!

“And now, you two young fire-watchers upon this sacred mountain, why have we told you all these our troubles? Because we ask your pity and your help. We ask you, while you sit up there in your little house watching this great forest, to watch also for us, that for four days none come to disturb us, out there at the other end of the mountain. Far have we come across the desert, here to beg Rain God to punish us all no longer for the unbeliefs of the few, and we must not be disturbed. Will you do that for us? If any come, your friends maybe, or whoever, will you say nothing to them about us, will you try to keep them from wandering out to the sacred kiva?”

“Yes! Yes! Of course we will!” cried Hannah.

“We will do our best to protect you,” I told them.

And at that those old men gave great sighs of relief; smiled happily at us; and in the eyes of the one who had done the talking I was sure that I saw tears.

The Wrongs of the Hopis

"You will need a rope. Down in the cabin is a rope ladder that we will loan you," I said to the interpreter.

"But we can use nothing of white men's make. I shall make a rope of twisted willows," he answered.

"How can you, without a knife?"

"Two sharp-edged stones shall be my knife," he said.

They turned from us, to go to the spring after the things they had left there, and to make their rope, and we went up into the lookout. The fire off to the north seemed to be burning as fiercely as ever.

"Well, now we know why so many beads, arrow-points, and pieces of pottery are here," I said.

"Yes. This little butte was a shrine: a shrine to Rain God. The things that the old-time people scattered here were their presents to him. I don't care if their beliefs were but dreams. Just think of them coming up here from their far-away homes

In the Great Apache Forest

to pray for water for their corn. How beautiful their faith!"

"Yes. And my dream, it, too, comes to nothing: the old man said that his long-ago people had no gold; had never heard of it! And I thought that there would likely be a lot of it in my cave find! Well, they can't get into the cave without a crow-bar to loosen the fallen roof rock. We shall be first into it after all."

"Don't be too sure of that. I just feel that the old men will find some way to get into it," said Hannah.

The little party soon came back up the trail with their packs of food and things, and with the glasses we made out that they each carried an olla—filled with water, of course. Somewhat behind them was the young Hopi, carrying a large bundle of willows upon his back. They all went out along the crest of the mountain, and then down to the cave hole in the west slope and out of our sight. I felt bad that I could n't be with them to see just what they did there.

'The Wrongs of the Hopis'

Along toward noon the wind ceased blowing. The smoke from the four great fires rose straight up, turned from dense black to a dark gray color and to less volume. We were glad: the men down there would be able to fight the fires with some chance of success. At twelve o'clock I reported no other fires started, and we went down to the cabin for lunch, at the edge of the clearing pausing and making sure that no one was in it. Everything inside was just as we had left it; we had expected to find the place stripped of food. At one o'clock we were back in the lookout. The four fires seemed to be burning as steadily as ever, and we feared that the Supervisor had been unable to get enough men to fight them. That was a long afternoon to us. As the hours passed, we wanted more and more to know what chance there was of the fires being extinguished. And we were all on edge to know what the Hopis were doing out at the other end of the mountain. At six o'clock, when I made my evening report, the office clerk told me that the Supervisor was out at the fires, and that, from

In the Great Apache Forest

what he could learn, they seemed to be steadily spreading. The men who set them had not been caught — not seen, even.

As we were leaving the lookout, I said to Hannah that we might at least go out along the summit far enough to see what the Hopis were doing at the cave hole, but she shortly answered: "We shall do nothing of the kind! You know that they do not want to be spied upon!"

Again we found that nothing had been taken from the cabin during our absence. I brought in a lot of stovewood, and water from the spring, and we cooked a big supper, and then no more than tasted it. We were too anxious to enjoy the meal. We dreaded the coming night. Soon after sunset we barred the cabin door and sat in the darkness. After a time I asked Hannah what she was thinking about?

"I am wondering if Henry King has fallen in with those firebugs and become one of them," she answered.

"Just what I was thinking. I believe that he has

The Wrongs of the Hopis

joined them, and is rustling what food they eat. How I wish I knew where they hide out!" I said.

"Oh, let's draw the curtains and light the lamp! I just can't bear sitting here in the darkness, thinking about those terrible men!" she cried.

CHAPTER VII

THE OLD MEN IN RAIN GOD'S CAVE

AS I drew the curtains, I saw that it was now quite dark outside; the moon had not yet come up. Hannah struck a match to the lamp, and we somehow did feel better, sitting in its light. Then, as before, there came a soft tapping upon the door, without our having heard footsteps nor creaking of the flimsy porch boards.

"It is the young Hopi," I whispered.

"Yes. But make sure of it," Hannah told me; and I called out: "Who is there?"

"I, your friend," came the hissed answer in the voice that we knew, and when I had taken down the bar, the Hopi stepped quickly inside, and we saw that he held in his left hand, close up against his breast, a short, thick-bodied bow and a few arrows.

"Oh, where did you find those?" Hannah cried, as I slammed the door bar back in place.

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

. "In the kiva. In Rain God's kiva. The old men brought them out to me. The bow cord had rotted; the point wrappings, too. But we have plenty of deer sinew. See: I have made a new cord and re-wrapped the points," he softly answered, and held them close to the lamp. We saw that the points were very small, and all five of them of almost transparent rock.

"Glass-rock points!" I said.

"Obsidian, the archæologists call it."

I stared at him, open-mouthed, I guess. Here were new words to me. English words, and an Indian speaking them! I did n't know what to say.

"Silly! You don't know what an archæologist is?" cried Hannah.

"A student of the ancient people; of their homes and the things that they made. I have been with one of them; he taught me much; among other things, that this glass rock is obsidian," the young Hopi explained. And again I was staggered! How very much more than I he knew, and he a desert Indian!

In the Great Apache Forest

"But how did your old men get past the fallen roof rock and into the cave?" Hannah asked.

"You did not notice that it was broken? No? Well, it was broken in two pieces. We pried them apart with a short pole, got an end of my willow rope around the first piece and dragged it out, all of us pulling, and then we got out the other piece in the same way.

"And now I am going to tell you something that will surprise you," he went on, as though we had n't been getting surprises from the time he came in. "But, first, what of the bad men of the forest — have you seen any of them? or had news about them?"

I answered that we had seen none of them; that the sheriff's men seemed to be unable to find them.

"Well, now to surprise you," he said. "When we got the passageway clear and my old men started to crawl in past where the rock had lain, the one in the lead, carrying his light of pitch-pine splinter, came to a sudden stop and cried out so loudly that

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

even I could hear him: 'Here is death! Here is the skeleton of a man!'

"I could not hear what more he said; just the rumble of voices came to me where I sat, up on top at the edge of the place of descent. But soon they came backing out, one by one, and climbed the willow rope and sat beside me, and old White Deer — he who had carried the light — said: 'No, brothers, the bones there are the bones of an Apache. I am sure of it, for I held the light high and saw that the leg bones ran down into a pair of rotting, curved-up toes Apache moccasins. Beside the bones is a rusty old cap-lock gun, another proof that he who died there was an enemy. None of our people would have carried a white man's weapon into the sacred place.'

"'And now it is defiled, forever defiled by what lies in there. We may as well turn about and go home!' cried one, in great distress.

"'No! Not so,' White Deer answered. 'Look you! Rain God himself dropped that roof rock, trapped our enemy right there in the kiva. No.

In the Great Apache Forest

More than ever he likes his kiva because of what he has done there. He does n't like the Apaches any more than we do. They don't pray to him for rain; they hate it because it leaks down through their miserable brush houses and wets their skins.'

"'But if we go in there we cannot escape brushing against what lies in the passage, the Apache bones, the gun, and we shall become tainted and our prayers as nothing,' said another.

"'The passage shall be cleared for us: our young student shall clear it,' White Deer answered.

"'What? I clear it — I drag out those bones, and the gun; then shall I become tainted!' I cried

"'But to keep us free from taint is one reason why we have you with us,' he told me. 'Of course you will become tainted, but as soon as we return to Oraibi, you shall be made clean in our Flute Clan kiva.'

"'What is to be done with the enemy things?' I asked.

"'You will drag them out of the passage to the edge of the hole going down into the Under World,

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

and when I have said a prayer, you will drop them into it,' he said; and I followed him down our willow ladder to the ledge, where he lighted the pine splinters for me — ”

“But matches are white men's things!” Hannah cried; and I smiled, for I thought we were to show him how inconsistent his old men were.

He smiled too, and answered:

“We have with us the fire tools of the Flute kiva: a piece of flat wood, and a sharpened stick, like an arrow-shaft. The point of it is set against the flat wood and surrounded with dry rotten wood, and then the stick is twirled between the palms of one's hands until it burns into the flat wood and sets the rotten wood afire. That is the way we make fire; the ancient way; the one pure way!

“Well, I took the light and crept into the passage and soon came to the Apache bones and the gun lying beside them. I found, also, a rotting rawhide pouch containing many bullets, and then a powder horn, and when I shook it and found that it was empty, I laughed, for I knew just what that Apache

In the Great Apache Forest

enemy had done: he had gone into Rain God's kiva to destroy whatever offerings my people had placed there, and when he found that Rain God had trapped him, he had fired his gun, hoping that his people, camped somewhere below, would hear it and come to him. So long as he had powder he had hope; but when he fired the last charge of it, and no one came, then he knew that he must die. Oh, I am sure that he then tore at that fallen rock until his fingers bled. And every time that he cried out to his Apache gods to help him, Rain God mocked him. He suffered terribly from thirst; from hunger; and after days of suffering, died.

“‘Ah, ha, Apache dog! You would do wrong to our sacred kiva!’ I said, and got below the bones and the other things and began pushing and tossing them ahead of me up the passage, and with them an old knife in its rotting sheath, until I had them all out upon the open ledge. Beyond them stood White Deer, and above, looking down at us, the other old men. White Deer made a certain prayer, and then a sign to me. I swept the whole pile of things from the

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

ledge into that straight-down hole in the mountain that goes to the Under World. We heard them striking, rattling from wall to wall of it for a long time. Said White Deer, then: 'Our people down there in that rich and happy land, from which we all came and to which we shall all return — they will rejoice over the presents that we have just dropped down to them. They will dance over those Apache bones!' And then he took the light from me and crept into the passage. I climbed up on top and sat with the others, awaiting his return.

"He was gone so long that we began to be worried about him. But at last he came out upon the ledge and climbed up to us, and handed me the ancient bow and arrows, the points that had dropped from them, and told me to repair them and we should then have a real weapon of defense. Just as the description of the kiva had been preserved by the priests of the Flute Clan, so had he found it, he said, except that there remained in place only one of the sacred ollas, a beautiful, small-neck, white olla with paintings in black of rain clouds, lightning,

In the Great Apache Forest

and the winds. All the others had been smashed upon the rock floor, no doubt by the Apache whom Rain God had trapped. There was much dry, powder-like brush scattered about, remains of the beds of priests of the long ago, and under a heap of it he had found the bow and arrows.

“Well, my old men have kept me busy all day, bringing up brush for their beds and wood for their fires, and there they are, comfortable in the kiva, and beginning the long and secret Rain God ceremonies that we hope will bring much water to our plantings, away out there in the desert.

“And I” — he cried, straightening up, clapping his hands together, his eyes shining — “if all goes well, next spring I, too, shall be a priest of the Flute Clan, and I shall know all the secrets of the kiva, and be praying for heavy rains for the gardens of my people.”

“And what will your teachers say to that?” Hannah asked him.

“Oh, they will be mad, very mad at me; they will call me names!”

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

"I don't understand you," I told him. "Hating white men's ways and religion, as you do, why have you learned all that they could teach you?"

He looked at me and at Hannah very earnestly before he answered. "I will tell you," he said, "for I am sure that you two must have pity for my poor people. At first I did not try to learn. It then came to me that it would be well to understand English, for I could stand around and know what the whites were saying about my people, what more wrongs they planned to do them. Our priests heard about my intention and urged me to learn all that I could get out of my teachers, and from books, so that I can be a wise interpreter for them, for the Hopi people. Oh, how hard I have studied! I have learned much! It is now planned that I shall become a priest of the Flute Clan, and then go to Washington, face the President, and demand that certain things be done for us. I shall say to him that the Constitution of the United States guarantees religious liberty to us all, yet his Department of Indian Affairs forcibly takes our children from our homes and

In the Great Apache Forest

obliges them to learn a religion that is not ours. I shall say to him that we want to be as free as the white people are. I shall ask him to recall the agent, and other men he has placed with us, and to order the different missionaries to get off from our land, to keep entirely away from our villages, his school-teachers, too, so that we People-of-Peace be left to the peace that is rightfully ours."

"And if the President refuses — he may even refuse to see you — what then?" Hannah asked.

He smiled. "Then I shall go to the newspaper men," he answered. "I shall give them a story of our wrongs and of our demands that they will gladly print. Once the people of this great country read it, I am sure that our wrongs will be righted."

For a moment or two Hannah and I could do nothing but stare at one another and at the young Hopi; we both felt that, compared with him, we were but little children in our knowledge of the world and its ways.

And then he said: "I am going to try you out. Tell me which side you take in this matter — our

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

side, or that of the men in Washington who force us to live according to their rules?"

"Your side!" — "Oh, your side, of course!" we cried.

"Ah! I knew that you would," he said, clapping his hands. "Yes, it is just as my good, wise archæologist friend says. More than once he has told me that ours is a just plea for liberty!"

We talked on, then, about other things, and finally I said to him that he had not yet told us his name. He laughed, and replied: "My first teachers gave me a name — no matter what it is; I do not like it. My real name is Singing Frog.

"Ha! You laugh!" he went on, turning to Hannah, and smiling, too. "Well, with us that is a very old and honorable name. The frog is a bringer of rain. With us he is sacred: no Hopi would think of killing one. We have a Frog Dance that is a very beautiful ceremony. When our gardens parch from want of water, our priests take our young men to the head of a wash, and there, after they have prayed Ancient Frog for water, and have sung the

In the Great Apache Forest

song of the frog, the young men all start off down the wash, jumping like frogs, and rolling loose stones before them just as a cloudburst takes them rolling and grinding down. That ceremony often brings the rain."

Sister and I did not even smile when he told us that; we felt that it was not for us to try to talk him out of his strange beliefs. But mention of the frog brought back to me something that I had had in mind, and I said to him: "I guess you will say that we have done wrong, but anyhow I am going to tell you: we have hunted around, up on top, and found a lot of things, beads, arrow-points, some strangely carved sticks, and a turquoise frog, that now, since talking with you, we know must have been left there by your long-ago Hopi people." And then I told Hannah to get the things. She brought them from under her bunk and spread them out on the table, and the Hopi gave a little cry when he saw the turquoise frog: "Oh, what would n't I give to have one like that!" he said. "Not that one, for we may not take anything that has been given to

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

the gods. That is a piece of very ancient work, and is itself a perpetual prayer for rain. The sticks are prayer sticks, offerings to Rain God, as are the beads and other things."

"What is the white material that the turquoise is set in?" Hannah asked.

"You do not know? Why, that is a cutting from the half of a clam-shell from the Gulf of California; and that made the piece all the more powerful, for the clam, as well as the frog, is a bringer of water. Some priest of the long ago valued it as he did his life; our people of that time must have been in desperate need of rain, for him to have offered it here with his prayers."

"Oh, go on; do tell us more!" Hannah begged.

"Yes, I will," he answered. "I will tell you something that our priests never knew until it was told to them by my good friend — by the archæologist I have mentioned. Do not ask me his name, for he has told me to give it to no one until I have made my trip to Washington, and perhaps not even then.

"Before this great student came to us, learned

In the Great Apache Forest

our language, and at last was invited into our kivas to take part in the secret ceremonies of our priests, this much we knew about ourselves: we knew that we Hopis are a mixed people; a people of different clans. That our main clan, the Water Clan, came into this country from the south long before the coming of the first white man, and were here in time joined by clans of Shoshones, from the north, and clans of Pueblos from the east, all seeking refuge from the Apaches and Navajos, and at last together forming the Hopi tribe, the People-of-Peace. It was the greatest of these clans, the Water Clan, that furnished the religion for the tribe, and also the art of making beautiful pottery, and of weaving cotton cloth. The Water Clan was the last remnant of the numerous people who once had made irrigated gardens of the Salt River and Gila River valleys, and there built large pueblos in which to live. I, myself, have seen the ruins of one of these, the Casa Grande as the whites call it, about forty miles east of Phoenix. The main house of that pueblo was four stories high, with walls of concrete six feet

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

thick, and the most of it, after hundreds and hundreds of years, still stands. Safe in their great houses, and with full canals of water for their plantings, the people were happy, there in that hot country — Giant Cactus Land. And then came the Apaches and the Navajos and drove them northward, up the rivers that you call the Verde, the Salt, the Gila, and the Tonto. In the valleys they built small pueblos, and homes in the cliffs, constantly attacked by their enemies, until, at last, after several hundred years of moving and building and abandoning, the few who survived made their last stand out there in the desert, where we are to-day. That much we knew about ourselves.

“We know much more now. Our archæologist friend tells us that away down in Old Mexico he has seen ruins, also named the Casas Grandes, where once lived the ancestors of the builders of the Gila River and Salt River pueblos. That he has proved by his finds there of pottery and other things. And why did our far-back fathers abandon that rich country? There was good reason for it, he says.

In the Great Apache Forest

When the first white men that entered Mexico, the Spaniard Cortez and his soldiers, came to the great city of the Aztecs and conquered it, they found stored there in houses twenty thousand human skulls, skulls of people that the Aztecs every year sacrificed to the sun. The Aztec warriors were, of course, as time went on, obliged to go farther and farther from home to capture people for these yearly sacrifices, and at last they began making attacks upon our fathers, and finally obliged them to flee from their homes and fields.

“So, there you have the history of us as we know it. Is it not a pitiful story! From the earliest times down to this very day we have been a persecuted people, we whose one desire has been to live in peace among our fields of corn, and worship our gods as they command us to do.”

Our friend's face was very sad as he ended his tale, and Hannah and I felt sorry for him and his People-of-Peace. We told him that we did, but somehow could n't put into words all that we felt. And we were glad that he had become friendly to

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

us. He had given us a new and a true outlook: never again should we think that all Indians were lazy, worthless, treacherous, and cruel savages. The Apaches were all that, but the Hopis, People-of-Peace, why, they had many traits that some of our white people might well copy!

"Well, I told you that I would stand watch for you to-night, and I think it is time for you to sleep," our friend told us.

"Oh, I don't think there is any danger; that grub-stealing deserter has n't the sand to make a night attack upon us," I said.

"But Henry King is n't the only bad man in this forest. I am more afraid of those I.W.W. firebugs than I am of him. I say that we stand watch, by turns, all night!" cried Hannah.

Of course we counted her out of that, and then our friend insisted upon taking the watch alone, and we went out, and sister barred the door behind us. We sat upon the edge of the little porch for some time, listening for any suspicious sounds, but heard none; heard nothing but the hooting of owls away

In the Great Apache Forest

down in the canyons. A faint light in the east told us that the moon would soon appear, and my friend said that he would go across the little clearing and into the thick spruces to keep his watch. He went, and I turned the corner of the cabin and got into my bunk.

I awoke with a start, and the feeling that all was not well with us. The moon was shining straight down into the clearing and I could plainly see all that part of it not shut off from me by the cabin. Nothing was moving there, but I had no more than raised up when I heard¹ something behind me, around on the west side of the cabin; something moving with footsteps so light that I could barely hear them: "The deserter, the firebugs are here!" I thought, as I looked back over my shoulder, at the same time lying back upon my pillow. I don't know why I did that. I just did it, and of course just as soon as my head struck the pillow I could only look straight out from me, and eastward down the clearing to the spruces where — if he had n't fallen asleep — our friend was watching the cabin.

The Old Men in Rain God's Cave

And now that I was back flat upon my bed, I dared not sit up again, for whoever was there behind the cabin was no doubt looking around the corner of it, and would put a bullet into me the instant I started to rise up. No, the one thing for me to do was to lie perfectly still and pretend that I was asleep. The man then might pass me — he could not see my rifle that I was gripping under my coverings — and once his back was to me I would have the drop on him. If he had not come to the cabin straight from the west, then our Hopi watcher had already seen him, and we should be two against one. That thought helped a lot. All the same, I sure was scared. And now I again heard the soft footsteps. My heart thumped faster than ever and my throat went dry. I closed my eyes so that I could barely see through the trembling lids. The night prowler was coming nearer. I fancied that I could hear him breathe.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEATH OF OLD DOUBLE KILLER

I WAS right: I could hear the prowler's breathing as well as his soft footsteps. He was almost to the head of my bunk, and, oh, how I wanted to spring out of it and run for the shelter of the spruces, there where our Hopi was. I gritted my teeth together and held my breath; my eyelids were trembling so that I had to close them for an instant, and when I slightly opened them, there, not three feet from my head and considerably higher from the ground, was the head of a monster bear. It was turned toward me; the mean little eyes were staring right into my face and the wet, black snout was all wiggly, sniffing the air, and I knew at once that old Double Killer himself was staring at me, for no other bear's head could be as large as that. The talk of our mountain hunters flashed through my mind, and I knew that I must not risk a shot at him; that my one chance to live

'The Death of Old Double Killer'

was to lie perfectly still. And maybe that was n't hard to do! Then slowly the head turned from me, moved forward, and the whole body of the bear came into view, a body as big as that of a steer, and covered with heavy, dark, silver-tipped fur, except that along the back still clung to the new growth some ragged patches of the winter coat. As the bear moved forward his fur, his whole hide heaved and rippled at every step. It was queer that in my terrible fear of him I should notice that. But he made only three or four steps, and paused, half turned and again stared at me, and I thought that now my end was surely come, that he was about to spring upon me.

“Anyhow, I'll die fighting,” I said to myself, and now gone a bit crazy, I guess, was just on the point of springing up and firing at him, when he suddenly threw up his head, made a quick whirl, and looked the other way. And then I saw what he did, the young Hopi stepping lightly toward us, with that old-time bow, arrow fitted, and half raised. I could hardly believe my eyes. If I had no chance against

In the Great Apache Forest

the bear with my rifle, what chance had he with his old bow and stone-tipped arrows?

My eyes were wide open now as I stared at him and tried to plan what I should do. I glanced at the bear and saw that the hair above his shoulders was stiffly bristling forward, like that of an angry dog. And then I looked back at the Indian and saw him stop short, raise his bow and let fly at the bear, and turn and run for the timber from whence he had come. With a roar louder and madder than the bellow of a mad bull, the bear took after him, for the arrow had stung into him. I had distinctly heard its plunk.

Inside the cabin Hannah was now crying: "George! George! Where are you? What's the trouble?"

"Quick! Open the door!" I shouted to her as I sprang from my bunk, and ran to the edge of the porch. By that time the Hopi was almost to the edge of the timber, and the bear was gaining upon him with wonderful long and quick leaps, but still all of forty yards behind. I raised my rifle and fired

The Death of Old Double Killer

at the bear; and again; and a third time with more careful aim, and hit. With another awful roar that old bear suddenly squatted and twisted back and bit his rump where the bullet had struck into it, and I fired again at the dark mass of him, for at that distance and in the moonlight I could do no better. Well, what happened then was sure a surprise to me: with the crack of the rifle that bear just flopped straight out upon the ground and with never a roar, nor a grunt, even, jerked his legs a few times and lay still.

For a moment or two I just stood there and stared; somehow I could n't think straight. It was Hannah who brought me to my senses.

"Why, George! You have killed him!" she cried.

I had not heard her open the door, but there she was, wrapped in a big blanket, standing on the porch close beside me. "Why, I believe that I have killed him. And, oh, Hannah! He is old Double Killer!" I told her.

"You must be mistaken; it can't be him!" she said.

In the Great Apache Forest

I did not answer, for just then we heard strange singing; strange words to a queer, happy-sounding tune. It was our Hopi friend, singing and dancing from the spruces out to the bear. We ran across the clearing and joined him beside the body of the great beast. Paying no attention to us, he kept on singing for a moment or two, and then said: "I could not help it. I just had to sing that, our song of thanks to the gods for dangers safely passed."

"Danger! I should say that you were in danger! Why did you come running out toward this great bear with just your bow and arrows?" I cried.

"Why, to save you! To get the bear away from your bunk. I thought that he was going to spring upon you. I was safe enough. I knew that I could get back here and up into one of these trees before he could overtake me," he answered, as calmly as though what he had done was an every-day occurrence.

"Don't think that I was asleep," he went on. "The bear surely came from the west straight to the cabin, or I should have seen him when he en-

The Death of Old Double Killer

tered the clearing. And did you notice: my unfeathered arrow struck him! Did n't he roar! Let us see where the point went in."

We found the point and a couple of inches of the broken shaft in the bear's right shoulder, and saw that my last bullet had struck into the brain close in front of the base of the right ear. I stepped the length of the carcass and found that it was a little more than nine feet. Then with my hands I measured one of the hind paws: "It is all of fourteen and a half inches!" I said. "There can be no doubt about it: this is old Double Killer, and no other!"

"Yes! And just think with that one last shot you earned two hundred dollars!" cried Hannah.

"How is that? The hide can't be worth more than fifty dollars," said the Hopi.

She told him about the reward offered by the cattlemen for the death of Double Killer, and why the bear had been so named. He turned to me: "How nice for you; that is a lot of money," he said.

"Nice for the three of us; we each make about

In the Great Apache Forest

eighty dollars," I answered; and how they smiled.

"I need the money!" Hannah exclaimed.

"Eighty dollars will go a long way toward paying the expense of my trip to Washington," said our friend.

In our excitement we had forgotten all about our two-legged enemies, but now Hannah said that we were running no little risk, standing there in the open. We agreed that there was no help for it. The bear had to be skinned, and at once, or the hide would spoil.

Said the Hopi then: "I was tainted when I moved the Apache bones and the gun out of the kiva entrance. I cannot be worse tainted now by handling other whites' things. Give me one of your knives and we'll soon have this hide off."

Hannah brought the knives from the cabin and we fell to work, she standing by and keeping a sharp watch on all parts of the clearing. We took great care not to cut the hide by a slip of our knives, and were a long time working at the head, and skinning the feet down to the long toe nails, which we

The Death of Old Double Killer

took off with the hide. Day was breaking when we had it free from the carcass. It was so large and heavy that I could not lift it alone. We spread it out upon the ground, flesh side up, and admired its great length and breadth. And then our friend said that we were to leave the stretching and drying of it to him. We folded it, rolled it up, and Hannah brought soap, and we went to the spring and washed in the outlet. Refusing to eat with us, the Hopi then hurried off up top to wait upon his old men.

At eight o'clock, when Hannah and I got up to the lookout, we saw at once that the big fire had made considerable headway during the night. The forest was so dry that an army of men would be required to put it out, and men were not to be had so we learned by listening in, after I had made my nine o'clock report to the Supervisor. When I told him that we had killed old Double Killer, he sure was surprised, and pleased, and said that he would tell the secretary of the Cattle Association about it.

In the Great Apache Forest

At ten o'clock, Mr. Keller, the secretary, called me up: "You're sure you have potted that old Double Killer?" he asked.

"We sure have! His hide is nine feet long, and his hind feet fourteen and a half inches. White spot on the breast; several old, healed bullet wounds in the carcass," I answered.

"Well, I guess that's him, all right. You bring the hide down, when you get around to it, just for proof, you know, and I'll give you our check for the two hundred dollar reward that we offered for him. Boy, you sure have done a good job in putting an end to that old cattle killer. How did you have the sand to tackle him?"

"Just had to do it, that's all," I answered; and he hung up. I had no intention to tell him about our Hopi friends and their strange mission to our mountain.

The young Hopi was going down the west slope of the mountain for wood and water for his priests, so we did not see him until noon, when he came to us and said that he was free until evening, and

The Death of Old Double Killer

would go down with us, when we went to lunch, and put in the afternoon fleshing and stretching the bear hide. There was a lot of meat and fat on it. And then, there was the carcass to be burned, the quickest and best way to dispose of it. When we asked him what his old men were doing, he replied that they were making a lot of prayer sticks, saying certain prayers, singing certain songs to Rain God, and trying to get revealing dreams.

“Revealing dreams?” Hannah questioned.

“Yes. To priests — and sometimes to others — are now and then given dreams by which it is learned what is to happen, whether of good or bad to the dreamer, and to the Hopi people. I know that you do not believe in dreams — oh, well, wise though white people are, there are some things — strange things — that they have yet to learn,” he answered.

I made my noon report of no new fires, learned that the firebugs had not been found, and we went down to the cabin, expecting to find it ransacked, but saw at a glance that no more food had been

In the Great Apache Forest

taken. We cooked some slices of ham, fried potatoes, and baked a pan of biscuit, and this time, when Hannah asked our friend to eat with us, he replied that he would.

"I am so much tainted now," he said, "that more will make no difference. Yes, I will eat with you."

During the meal I asked him how he was going to stretch the bear skin.

"You shall know when you return here this evening, and you will be pleased. If you have a spare length of rope, give it to me."

I pulled the ropeladder from under the bunk and told him to help himself.

When Hannah and I returned to the lookout at one o'clock, she stood watch and I slept. Shortly after three o'clock she wakened me and said that I was wanted at the telephone, and laughed.

"What you laughing about? Who wants me?" I growled, still so sleepy that I could hardly get to the 'phone. She only laughed again as she handed me the receiver. And then I recognized the voice of

The Death of Old Double Killer

John La Motte, an old-time mountain man and trapper. "That you, George Crosby? Well, consarn yer pictur', what you mean by killin' my bear, that there old Double Killer, an' me after him for the last four years?"

"I'm sure sorry, John," I answered. "'Course, if I'd known he was your bear, I would n't have dreamed of shooting at him."

"Haw-haw-haw!" he roared. "But, say, all joshin' aside, how on yearth did you manage to put it over on him?"

"I was sleeping outside, up against the cabin wall, and along about two o'clock he came prowling along and stopped within three feet of my bunk, and went on a few steps and stopped and looked back at me, and then went on, and when he was part-way across the clearing I wounded him, and then put a bullet into his brain. Of course I know that it was only by chance that I got him—I could n't aim at his head in the moonlight —"

"Sufferin' cactus an' cat's-claws!" the old man broke in. "I should say 't was a scratch! Why, boy!

In the Great Apache Forest

It's the greatest wonder on yearth that he did n't jump you right there in your bunk! Wa'n't you plumb scared?"

"I sure was! Hardly over it now!"

"Well, seein' 't wa'n't fer me to get him, I'm sure glad he's your'n. Wish't I was up your way, free an' easy. 'Stead of that, here I be, roped into fightin' this big fire! Fit it all night, got to fight it again to-night! Well, boy, you take good care of your bear hide — it's sure worth a hundred dollars — an' then, you get the two hundred reward. Well, so long, boy!"

"Wait!" I cried. "What about the firebugs —"

"Them firebugs are sure slick!" he broke in. "The sheriff's men and them there Apache police ain't findin' 'em. 'Course, I don't blame the sheriff's outfit — white men are no trailers. But them Apaches, why, boy, they can trail a deer over bare rocks! They just natch'ally don't want to find them outlaws, because why: they're plumb ag'in' law an' order! Trouble amongst us whites is sure duck soup to them!"

The Death of Old Double Killer

“Are you making any headway with the fire?” I asked.

“Some. She’s sure a big one, and the forest is mighty dry. But if the wind don’t raise, I b’lieve we’ll have her out in four or five days. Well, so long!”

“So long!” I answered, and hung up.

Hannah had been standing close beside me, listening to our talk. “The old trapper is right,” she said. “You have had a narrow escape from that terrible bear!” She shivered.

“I know it! I sure know it!” I answered. And did n’t have to shut my eyes to again see that huge, mean-eyed head close in front of me.

Just before five o’clock we saw our Hopi friend come up on top and go on to the north end of the mountain to wait upon his old men. How we wished that we might see what they were doing in the cave! We presently noticed a thin drift of smoke coming up over the crest above it, and wondered how the old men could breathe when there was a fire in the cave.

In the Great Apache Forest

When we got down to the cabin that evening, we found the bear hide stretched and laced with shreds of rope into a frame of four stout poles leaning against the north side of the cabin — extending up to the very peak of it. Every bit of meat and fat had been removed, leaving the flesh side evenly dark-colored and as smooth as a piece of polished wood. We stood admiring it for some time. I thought of the coyote, and wolf, and wild-cat skins I had stretched upon the side of our barn to dry: all askew, and heavy with meat and fat, and was ashamed of my crude work.

“Just the other day,” said Hannah, “I read about an annual fur sale in St. Louis. I did n’t read it carefully, but, as I remember, grizzly bear skins sold for two hundred dollars. I believe we can get that much for ours.”

“We might, if we only knew where to send it.”

“We must know. When we go home we’ll look in the papers for the addresses of fur-buyers,” she said.

And from that moment the possibility of getting

The Death of Old Double Killer

that big sum for the hide was always in our minds. When the Hopi came down to us, at sunset, we told him about it, and I said that two hundred dollars seemed to be a lot of money for a bear hide, and he laughed:

“You have never been to Grand Canyon?” he asked. “No? Well, I have, several times. There is always a crowd of rich people at that place, people who spend money as carelessly as I would take up a handful of sand and cast it to the winds. I once saw ten hundred dollars paid there for a little painting, just a little painting of the cliff of Oraibi, and an old Hopi man sitting on it and looking off at the desert. I saw there a large painting of the Canyon that was sold for twenty thousand dollars. If I had the bear hide there, I believe that I could sell it at once for twice two hundred dollars!”

I'll bet that Hannah and I gasped when he told us that! For he looked at us and laughed, and went on: “In the big hotel at the Canyon, one can have meals and a small room for about ten dollars a day, and better rooms with a bathroom, for twenty-five

In the Great Apache Forest

dollars a day. The better rooms are always taken: that shows you how much many white people care for money."

"You take the bear hide there and sell it, and send us our share of the money," I told him.

"I'll do it, just as soon as I get my old men safely home," he answered.

We had waited supper for him, and now, while we ate, our Indian friend told us a lot about his school life in the East, and the big cities he had seen, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington. He kept us so interested that we hardly knew what we were putting into our mouths, and once I mistook the salt cup for my tea cup and sure got a surprise.

Later on, after we had washed the dishes, we asked how his old men were getting on in the cave, and how they managed to endure a fire in it?

"Oh, they are doing fine, and are very happy," he answered. "There is a narrow crack in the rock, running from the roof of the kiva into the hole going down to the Under World, and that carries off

The Death of Old Double Killer

the smoke. They are very comfortable in there. They have said many of their prayers, and sung the songs that go with them, and last night White Deer had a revealing dream: he dreamed that he was in a great rainstorm out upon the desert; that he saw heavy rain falling upon our plantings at the foot of the cliffs of Oraibi. That is a pretty sure sign the Rain God is taking pity upon us, that he will soon give us what water we need."

"If he does, he will also be doing us a good turn: he will put out our terrible forest fires," said Hannah, with a laughing toss of her head.

"Oh, please don't laugh at us!" our friend cried. "We do not laugh at your beliefs; we are very willing that you shall have your gods and believe in them, so do that much for us!"

"Oh, you misunderstand me!" she told him. "I was n't laughing at your beliefs. I was thinking how a big rain would put an end to the awful work of the fire-setters."

"That, also, my priests are praying Rain God to do," he solemnly answered.

In the Great Apache Forest

As I had had some sleep during the day, I took the first watch that night, while our friend slept on the porch, wrapped in his blanket. At midnight I called him, as agreed upon, and he stood watch for the remainder of the night. Nothing happened. Day came, we had an early breakfast, and then went up on top, Hannah and I to the lookout, the Hopi to his old men. We had no sooner climbed to the top of the little butte than we saw that the firebugs had again been busy during the night: a thick column of black smoke was rising from a point about two miles south of the big fires, and there was still another fire started to the west of Green's Peak. And this morning there was again a brisk wind! We felt blue enough as we looked down upon the mean work of the I.W.W. firebugs. How bold they were, and how cunning, setting the fires right where many men were constantly searching for them, and managing day after day to keep themselves safely hidden. The telephone called me, and the Supervisor said: "Hurry up to the lookout, George, and chart some new fires that are burning."

The Death of Old Double Killer

"We are on top. In the lookout! Wait, I'll give you the readings," I answered.

Hannah was already at the chart stand. She made the sightings, told me the degrees, and I repeated them.

And then the Supervisor said, more to himself than to me, I thought: "I don't know what to do! I can't get more men, oh, this is sure terrible!"

I wanted to ask him if there were any traces of the firebugs, but he rang off. Later on, we learned by listening in that the sheriff's men could not find even a footprint of them. We went outside and sat for hours looking down upon the forest and trying to think just where the fire-setters might be hiding. As they were afoot, we believed that they were cached somewhere within five miles of the sawmill. But where — just where?

The wind that we dreaded proved to be only an early morning breeze; it died completely out before ten o'clock and the day turned warm even up where we were. By noon the great desert to the north was lost in the heat waves rising from it. We had

In the Great Apache Forest

brought a lunch this day, and asked the young Hopi to share it with us. When he came, a little after twelve, he was very silent and anxious, we thought, and finally Hannah asked what was troubling him.

He pointed to the northwest: "Our poor plantings are drying up, out there! If Rain God does not soon answer our prayers, we shall starve!" he answered.

"Yes. And we shall lose our forest, and starve along with our cattle," I told him.

"To-morrow is to be our great day. To-morrow my priests make their offerings, and sing and dance to Rain God, and you shall see them do it," he said.

CHAPTER IX

THE BEAR SKIN IS STOLEN

WHEN Hannah and I returned to the cabin that evening, we found everything as we had left it, and thought that the deserter had made up his mind to make no more raids upon our little stock of provisions. After I had started a fire in the stove, we went out and admired our great bear skin, now almost dry — so thoroughly had it been fleshed and stretched. I struck it with my hand and it boomed like a drum.

“Sister, our friend can’t be right: it is n’t possible that any one will pay four hundred dollars for that hide, big though it is!” I exclaimed.

“I guess that we have very little idea of what rich people are willing to give for things that they want. It seems to me that people who think nothing of paying a hotel twenty-five dollars a day for meals and a place to sleep, will not mind four hundred for the hide. And with the reward that we are

In the Great Apache Forest

to have, that will be six hundred in all, two hundred dollars for each of us. Oh, I never dreamed of having that much money of my very own!" she said.

We went back into the cabin and cooked supper, sure pleased over our good luck. Our Hopi friend came down just before sunset, and we all sat up to the table and ate and talked, and were just plumb happy. Our friend told us more about Grand Canyon and the rich people who visited it. A few of them, he said, seemed to appreciate what a wonderful place it was, but many just said: "Some cut, is n't it! Well, I've seen it, anyhow!" And then they would hurry from the rim back to the hotel to talk and eat and smoke and dance. Dancing — silly dancing — was more to them than looking down at that most wonderful sight in all the world. Some of those dancing women wore dresses that cost all of a thousand dollars each; and diamond necklaces and rings worth all the way up to fifty thousand dollars.

And at that Hannah cried out, "Oh, it does n't seem possible that there are women so rich as that!"

The Bear Skin is Stolen

"But it is so," our friend answered. "And more than that, there is a woman in Philadelphia — I have seen her — she once came to our Carlisle school — who owns over a million dollars worth of diamonds and pearls!"

"I guess that we may get four hundred for our bear hide," I said.

"Five hundred, maybe," said our friend. And we saw that he meant it.

Hannah and I were very happy that night, planning what we should do with all the money that we were soon to have.

Again our Hopi friend and I divided the night watch. Nothing happened. We had an early breakfast, cooked by Hannah, and then, after washing the dishes and packing a pail of lunch, we hurried up the trail, the Hopi to his old men and Hannah and I to the lookout. There had been no wind during the night, so we had hoped to find that the fires were, anyhow partly, under control. Not only were they burning as fiercely as ever; we saw at a glance that two more had been started during the night,

In the Great Apache Forest

both of them between the sawmill and the edge of the desert, and about a mile apart. Our hearts were sure heavy as we looked off at that wicked burning of our forest, and when I reported, at nine o'clock, the Supervisor's voice had a weary, hopeless sound as he answered: "Yes, George, I know just where the new fires are, you need n't chart 'em. Boy, if we don't soon get rain we shall lose all this end of the forest!"

"No use asking if the firebugs have been found?" I said.

"No. Don't ask!" he grimly answered, and rang off.

Shortly before ten o'clock our friend came up on to the crest of the summit, advancing toward us and waving his hands, and we soon met him.

"My old men have taken a liking to you two," he said. "Only my archæologist friend, of all the whites, has seen this Rain God ceremony, but just now, just as I was about to ask that you might see it, White Deer told me to come for you. Are n't you glad?"

The Bear Skin is Stolen

“Dear, kind old men, my heart goes out to them, to all the Hopi people,” Hannah answered for us.

“Would that all the whites were of the same heart as you!” he said.

We walked on along the crest of the mountain, passed the cave hole, thirty or forty yards down the west slope, and came to a stand. Our friend said that we should there be quite close to the old men when they came up on top from the kiva. We seated ourselves upon some slabs of rock and waited for their coming. Our friend called our attention to Escodilla Mountain, thirty or forty miles to the east at the edge of New Mexico, its long high crest ending abruptly almost at the desert's edge, and said that the Zuñi Indians went to its summit to pray for rain. Their pueblo in the desert was not more than a hundred miles north and west of the mountain. Hundreds of years back they had lived in the valley of the Little Colorado, and by means of their irrigating ditches had raised fine harvests of corn and other things. And then they, like the

In the Great Apache Forest

Hopi people, had been driven out into the desert by the Apaches and Navajos.

A slight disturbance of the rock caused us to turn suddenly and look the other way, and Hannah and I almost cried out at what we saw: the four old men coming up on to the summit from the cave hole, but apparently old men no more. They came stepping lightly up like so many boys, and, except for their moccasins, and broad-aproned breech clout — blue-black, with red, zigzag stripes, symbol of the lightning — were perfectly naked. Their bodies were painted a dull red.

All in line they came up on to the summit, not fifty yards from us, came to a sudden stop and raised their hands to the sky, and White Deer made a short prayer — to the sky gods, our friend whispered. They then looked down and prayed to the gods of the Under World, and in turn faced the east, the west, the north, and the south, saying a short prayer in each direction. That done, they began to sing, and, oh, what a strange, low, sad song it was. I can't begin to say how it affected Hannah

The Bear Skin is Stolen

and me. I saw tears in her eyes, and I think that there were some in mine. Our friend was holding a hand to his eyes, and his lips were moving — in prayer, I thought.

The song ended, and the old men danced to the east to an accompaniment of lighter song, and then to the three other points of the compass, at last sitting down to rest.

“Soon begin their heavy prayers! You shall see! Oh, they are going to pray hard to Rain God,” said our friend.

“Can’t you tell us a little of what they will say?” Hannah asked.

“Yes, a little of it. They will cry to him: ‘O powerful god, have pity upon us, your Hopi people! Look down upon our paintings: see how the short sprouts of corn fade and the leaves of the squash vines droop! O powerful Rain God, spread your cloud-blanket above them, make it leak plentifully down upon them! Soak the earth plentifully with your water, O powerful one, so that our plants shall have full growth! Do this for us soon, powerful one,

In the Great Apache Forest

else our little ones, our women, we ourselves die upon our desert cliffs from want of food!' There! that is some of the first prayer they will say."

The old men arose, stood facing the east, and White Deer began the prayer, the others at times joining in it. They then sang for a time, danced, said more prayers, and when almost out of breath, sat down for another rest, and kept looking up in all directions at the sky. All the morning flocks of small, fleecy white clouds had been drifting slowly southwestward, and now they had merged, most of them, into several clouds of great extent, white-edged, dark in the center, and turning darker and drifting ever so slowly around the summit of our mountain, and Mount Ord, close to the west. And presently a flash of lightning leaped from the cloud close above us and just south of the lookout, and then came a loud rumble of thunder. The old men leaped to their feet, raised their hands toward the cloud, and all four went wild with excitement, shouting, singing, praying, dancing, repeatedly raising their hands and then dropping them, fingers

The Bear Skin is Stolen

down extending, a most suggestive sign for falling rain.

Our friend became as excited as they were. He, too, stared up at the big cloud coming nearer, at other clouds slowly drifting toward it from the east and north, prayed in a voice that became more and more tense, occasionally turning to us and whispering hoarsely:

“Rain God is coming!”

“He has heard our prayers! He accepts our offerings!”

“Oh, my friends! Rain God is good! He is going to water our poor gardens!” This last after another flash of lightning and a peal of thunder almost over our heads.

And at that those old men just about went crazy: they trembled as they cried out their appeals and waved their hands to the cloud. And, yes, I’ve just got to say it: Hannah and I became tremendously excited too. Of course, we did n’t believe that those poor old men were bringing the rain, if rain were really coming, but we could no more help sharing

In the Great Apache Forest

in their hopes and fears than we could help breathing. And we wanted rain as badly as they did, driving downpours of rain to put out the forest fires; to give life to our planted fields and the grass of our cattle range; and to put an end to the awful work of the fire-setters! A sudden shock of cold rain in our faces brought us to our senses, but increased the old men's wild appeals to the sky, and our friend said to us: "Go! Run to your little place over there. I will join you as soon as my old men go back into the kiva."

We ran, circling past the old men and on along the crest up to the lookout, thunder and lightning booming and flashing all around us, and the rain becoming more and more heavy. We were quite wet when we got into the shelter of the station. I turned straight to the telephone, and when I reported the storm, the Supervisor shouted: "Good! Good! I hope it will rain a week!"

We built a fire in the little stove and waited for our Hopi friend to come to us. The thunder and lightning ceased; a great cloud rested upon the

The Bear Skin is Stolen

mountain and darkened the day; the rain came steadily down: it was killing the forest fires. We were very happy.

“Oh! Our bear skin: the rain will spoil it!” Hannah suddenly exclaimed.

“No, it is so well stretched that it will not be hurt — not if we keep the sun from it while it dries,” I told her. And, anyhow, I planned to cover it with what canvas we had.

The telephone was now every few minutes ringing the office, and we listened in. Green’s Peak, Nutrioso, Escodilla, Alpine, and the far-south stations of the Blue Range, were all reporting heavy rain. The storm was general, not local. It would surely last long enough to put out the fires. We waited impatiently for our Hopi friend to come, so that we could tell him the good news.

He came, a half-hour later, and smilingly stood and looked in at us through the open door: “Come in! Come in out of the wet!” I called to him.

“But I want to be wet!” he answered. “I want the rain to soak into me, for then I just feel that it is

In the Great Apache Forest

soaking into our gardens out there in the desert. Oh, are n't my old priests powerful! They brought this rain: Rain God could not refuse their prayers and prayer offerings!"

"We have been listening to the telephone reports: rain is falling all over this great forest," sister told him.

"Yes! Of course it is! Did you think that my priests prayed for just one little place? They asked for plenty for the whole country. They prayed and prayed Rain God to put out the forest fires as well as to give new life to our plantings!"

"And what are they doing now?" I asked.

"Feasting, there in the kiva. Smoking sacred cigarettes. Singing their song of thanks to Rain God!" he answered.

"Well, let us go down to the cabin and feast, too," Hannah proposed.

"But we have a lunch here," I said.

"Oh, who wants to eat that dry bacon and bread! We shall have a real feast. I shall bake a cake; a chocolate cake!" she exclaimed.

The Bear Skin is Stolen

So, out we went into the rain, carefully closing the door behind us, and down the trail we ran, splashing through little streamlets of water everywhere cascading down the steep mountain-side, our Hopi friend pausing to dance a few steps in the larger ones, and singing the while a quaint and lively little air that was very pleasant in our ears. And then, coming to the clearing, we raced across it, and at the cabin porch came to a sudden stand and stared at the open door — that we had carefully locked that morning — and at a litter of odds and ends upon the floor.

Hannah ran to the corner of the cabin: "The bear hide is gone!" she shrieked.

We joined her and stared at the empty frame; at the cut rope lacings strewn the ground.

"Henry King has been here again! He is the one who has our bear hide, the mean deserter! Coward!" Hannah cried.

I was so angry that I could n't speak. I turned and led into the cabin, and we stared at the wreck of it: not a sack of our flour, corn meal, beans, rice,

In the Great Apache Forest

and other things remained in the open food chest. The bacon and ham sacks were gone; the table had been swept clean of the eatables we had left upon it. All of Hannah's blankets had been taken, and her canvas bed cover. Her comb and brush and little mirror, too, and my box of 30-30 cartridges. I ran outside to my bunk and found that it had been stripped!

“One man could n't have packed off all our stuff; no, nor two: those I.W.W. firebugs have done this and Henry King brought them here,” I said when I went back inside.

“One man could have loaded it all upon a horse,” said our Hopi friend.

“Yes. But that deserter, those firebugs, are not using horses. Horses leave tracks; they can easily be trailed,” I said.

“That is so. Those men would not use them. Well, what are you going to do?”

“We have no food but the lunch that we put up; what can we do but go home?” cried Hannah.

The Bear Skin is Stolen

“That is the only thing for us to do. The rain has already washed out all tracks of the thieves, we can’t follow them, and we can’t stay here and starve,” I said.

“What? Go home! Let those bad men get away with our bear hide? Oh, no! no! We must have it back from them. You have no food, you say? Why, there is plenty of food up here: my old men have quite a lot of corn meal and pinole,¹ and there are plenty of deer: every evening I see them grazing at the edge of the timber under the north end of the mountain,” our Hopi friend exclaimed, and, oh, how his eyes were flashing!

“But if we have the food, what then? how can we get back the bear hide?” I asked.

“Wait! Let my old men talk to you about that,” he answered. “They said something the other day — only a few words — they were busy with their prayers, but I’ll bring them here. You shall hear them!” And with that he was out of the door and splashing up the little clearing.

¹ Wheat parched, and then coarsely ground.

In the Great Apache Forest

Hannah proposed that we telephone the Supervisor what had happened to us, but I decided that we should not do so before hearing what the old Hopi men had to say. We had brought our lunch back with us from the lookout, and now each took a third of it, leaving the remainder for our friend. Soon after we finished eating — and the dry bread and bacon now sure tasted good — we heard the little party slopping their way to us across the clearing. Our friend led the old men up on to the tiny porch — where they dropped their various belongings, and then, old White Deer leading, they came inside, and one by one gravely shook hands with us.

And then the leader said to us, our friend interpreting, of course:

“We are glad to shake hands with you, you two of good heart. We are glad to come into your house, now that we have brought the rain and are free to do as we please.”

“We are very glad to have you here. But you must be wet through. Hang up your blankets along

The Bear Skin is Stolen

the wall to dry, and sit here before the stove," I answered.

"Yes. We will sit with you for a time," the old man said; "but as to our blankets, we ourselves, we men weave them, and so tight that water does not go through them. We are dry enough."

They took seats then, two upon the food chest and the others upon boxes, and Hannah and I perched ourselves upon the bunk. No one spoke for some time. The rain continued to beat upon the iron roof. At last, quite to our surprise, White Deer arose and again shook sister's hand and mine. He then stood off a little way, threw back his blanket, and said to us — a sentence or two at a time as the interpreter nodded to him to proceed:

"Generous youth and girl: From day to day our young helper has told us of your troubles, but, busy with that we have come so far to do, we had no time for more than a few words together, now and then, about what we learned. It was with sad hearts that we looked out upon the great fires below, set by bad white men with intent to destroy this great

In the Great Apache Forest

forest, Rain God's garden. Yes. These mountain slopes are his garden, these great trees his plantings, their fine growth the result of his plentiful waterings. When our long-ago fathers came here every spring to pray and sacrifice to Rain God, they would no more have destroyed one of these trees than they would have destroyed themselves. And so we feel about it, and have prayed that the bad fire-setters be themselves destroyed.

“When our young helper told us that he was to have a share in the selling of the hide of the great bear that you killed, he made us very happy. We said to one another that the money he would get from that would be clean money, and enough, perhaps, for him to pay his way when he goes to ask the great white chiefs to free us, to ask that we be no longer slaves. And now that valuable bear hide is gone, gone with your food and your blankets, taken by these same destroyers of Rain God's beautiful garden!

“Can the hide, and your different things be recovered? Perhaps they can. When our young helper

The Bear Skin is Stolen

told us that white seizer-men, and Apache seizers, were hunting day after day for the fire-setters, and could not find them, we did not say much, but we kept that in mind. Morning after morning when we came up out of the kiva and saw fresh fires, and still more fires burning, we said that the fire-setters were in hiding somewhere near them, and in a place where the blaze of their own fires, their cooking fires, could not be seen, nor they themselves be caught while they slept, as sleep they must, at times.

“In our kivas out there in the desert, the old priests are ever instructing the new ones, not only in religion, but in the whole history of our people. So it is that we knew just how to come to this sacred mountain, knew the trail as well as though we had traveled it many times. And we know, just as well as though we had seen them, many places along this range of mountains that our people visited in the long ago. One of those places is a great cave; a cave so large, running so far into the mountain slope that, without a light, one could

In the Great Apache Forest

easily become lost in it and never find his way out. That cave is down there where those fires are burning. We believe that it is about halfway between the farthest east fire and the one farthest west. Now, perhaps you two know that cave?

"Let me question you," he went on. "North from here, and not far from the edge of the desert, is a long, double butte, bare on top; and west of it, and also near the desert, is a higher butte with a very sharp top. Is that not so?"

"Yes. The one farthest west is Green's Peak, the other is Poll Knoll."

"Good. We have our own names for them, but that does not matter now. I ask you: About halfway between those buttes is there not a small creek running out from the forest and ever being swallowed by the thirsty desert?"

"There is. We call it Conaro Creek."

"And just after it runs out of the forest does it not go down over three broken ledges of rock quite a ways apart, the middle ledge much the highest of the three?"

The Bear Skin is Stolen

And when that had been interpreted to us, Hannah and I sure stared at one another, and at him: he had described the place exactly. We both cried out: "Three ledges are there!" — "The center ledge is the highest!"

The old men all smiled, nodded to one another, and White Deer concluded: "At the foot of the center ledge, a short distance — a hundred steps — west of the creek, is the entrance to the cave."

"But we have been there many times! There is no cave hole in the ledge. There can't be, or we should have seen it!" I said.

"No, you would not have seen it unless you were carefully hunting for it. The entrance is small, only one man can pass in at a time, and it is well hidden: willows grow thickly all around it."

"But if we have never found it — we nor our people who have always lived here — it is n't likely that the fire-setters have found it," I said.

"They are just the kind of men that would find it," the old man answered. "The growth of willows near the water, the bare rocks all around to hold

In the Great Apache Forest

not the least trace of their goings and comings, why, they would have run to it as soon as they saw it, and, once into the willows, of course they found the cave! Do not laugh, do not doubt: We just know that those bad men have their hiding-place in that cave!”

“And if that is so, what then?”

“Trap them ! Roll two or three big rocks into the entrance and trap them!” he answered.

And just then Hannah gave a little cry and pointed to the shelf on the wall above the table: “Look! Our lamp is gone, and our candles!” she said.

I sprang from the bunk and looked behind the food chest: “Yes, and our can of coal oil too!” I cried. “The thieves are living in the cave: in the open, a fire would give all the light they want!” I turned to our young friend: “We are a weak outfit — shall we try to trap them?” I asked.

“Let us find out if they surely are in the cave,” he answered.

“That’s a go! We’ll do it!” I told him.

CHAPTER X

CATCHING THE FIREBUGS

RIGHT then and there we held a council of war, and decided that I was to tell as little as possible of our troubles and our plans. I then went to the telephone and called the Supervisor: "How about it — I suppose the rain has already killed the fires?"

"All but the dead, pitchy trees and logs; they are still burning," he answered.

"But they will soon burn out. We are out of provisions. May I have a couple of days off, to go for some?"

"Yes! Sure! The forest is already so well soaked that those firebugs can't do any more damage for a time, two days, anyhow."

"All right! We'll leave here early in the morning. I don't have to ring you up again, do I?"

"No. This is Tuesday. I give you off from now until Friday evening. You be back to your station at that time and ring me up. Good-bye!"

In the Great Apache Forest

So, there we were, free from that moment, and for three days. When the old men were told what had been said, White Deer remarked that my forest chief must be a good man. None but men of good heart would be watchers of Rain God's gardens. And there were others: the whites who studied the work of the people of the long ago, and those who raised crops of grain, and raisers of cattle and horses. They were just like the Hopis: they attended strictly to their own business; were never telling others how they must live, and what gods they must worship!

The rain showed no signs of stopping, and as the afternoon wore on, we told the Hopis that they were welcome to remain in our cabin for the night. They refused to do that, saying that they would make a shelter of brush under a spruce tree and be dry and comfortable. They then opened their sacks and gave us a good portion of their corn meal and pinole, and went out to build their shelter. Later on, at about five o'clock, the young Hopi and I started up the mountain to try to kill a deer. I had

Catching the Firebugs

seen the little band of them feeding evenings and early mornings, as well as he. They were generally on the east slope, and just above the timber line, at the north end of the mountain. So, instead of following the trail up on top, we turned off from it and quartered northward up the slope and soon neared the feeding-place. Rain was still falling; wisps of fog drifted past us through the trees; although the sun was still nearly three hours from setting, night seemed to be right upon us. There was a little better light when we arrived at the edge of the timber and looked out upon the grass slope, and saw no deer, and were disappointed. I said that they might not come out to feed on such a rainy evening, and he laughed softly: "No matter what the weather is, they have to eat!" he answered.

Just then a very heavy bank of fog came drifting past us, and he plucked my sleeve: "Come. We go with it!" he said. I did not understand what he intended to do, but I followed; out into the open and quartering up toward the end of the summit, only two or three hundred yards away; and now it was

In the Great Apache Forest

so dark that we could no more than see where to put our feet. We presently stumbled up against a thick bunch of stunted alder brush and he pulled me down beside him in the lower edge of it; the fog bank cleared and I saw that we were in the center of the open slope.

"Most white men and some Indians are poor hunters," said my friend. "They trail around, and around, and the deer, ever watchful, see them first, and with a few jumps are gone from sight. Good hunters learn where the game goes to feed, and to drink, and then they go to that place and sit quietly, patiently, for the game to come to them!"

"I will remember that," I told him. And had no more than spoken, when, straight down from us, four deer came stringing up out of the timber, two of them very large bucks, the others about two-year-olds. They scattered out, moving with quick steps from one patch of brush to another and nipping off the green and tender tips and leaves, and coming always nearer to us. My friend had not brought his ancient bow, because he had been un-



I TOOK A CAREFUL SIGHT AT ONE OF THE BIG BUCKS

Catching the Firebugs

able to find any feathering for the arrows, and because the rain would have wet the bowstring and made it sag. I whispered to him to take my rifle — to make the shot. He smiled and refused with a quick, out motion of his hand. I took a careful sight at one of the big bucks, broadside to me, and when I pulled the trigger, he keeled over backward, rolled down the slope a few yards, and lay still against a rock. The others stared at him for a moment, and then made for the timber with high, stiff jumps.

An hour later we returned to the cabin with all the meat that we could carry, and then two of the old men came with us and we brought in all the rest of it. During our second trip up the mountain, Hannah had made a large cake of corn meal and water, and, regardless of the rain, brought in a few dry quaking aspen poles and chopped them into right lengths for the stove. We filled the firebox with these, and when they had burned to a mass of red coals, we removed the stone top and broiled some loin steaks of the deer over them. Maybe that

In the Great Apache Forest

was n't a good supper! Juicy venison and corn-meal cake sure were a feast to us. And we had music with it: through the open door there came up to us, clear and soft, the singing of the old men in their camp down by the spring. They were evidently very happy. A little later, when our friend came up to us, he said that the songs were sacred ones; that the old men had been praying and singing to the gods, giving thanks for the rain, asking that it continue, and that we all might survive danger of every kind, and capture the bad men and recover the bear hide.

We now built a big fire close in front of the little roofed porch, and in the course of a couple of hours thoroughly dried ourselves before it. And while we did that we tried to talk of many things, but always came back to the loss of our bear hide and the meanness of the men who had taken it. It meant so much to us all, that silver-tipped hide: To our friend, the means of carrying out his mission for his people. To Hannah and me, more money than we had ever seen at one time in all our lives; money for

Catching the Firebugs

Liberty bonds; for the Red Cross; and for some nice Christmas presents to send to our Uncle Cleveland, fighting the Huns in far-away France. And thinking and talking of him made us hate all the more the mean deserter, Henry King, and the terrible I.W.W. fire-setters. And were we really about to trap them in that cave at the edge of the desert? It did n't seem possible that we could have such good luck. More and more I doubted that the outlaws had found the place, but more and more stoutly our friend insisted that they had found it. "I can't explain how my old priests have the power," he said, "but this much I know: it is given them to see things that only they can see. They say that the bad white men are in that cave; without doubt they are there!"

It was all of ten o'clock when our friend went back to his old men. As soon as he had gone, Hannah put on her heavy coat and lay down upon the boughs in her bunk, and I stretched out on the floor. We awoke three or four times during the night, and each time I got up and built a fresh fire

In the Great Apache Forest

in the stove, for we were very cold. Rain fell steadily until near morning, when it began to come down with driving gusts of wind, a sure sign, we thought, that the storm was about over. It did pass a little later, and the sun came up in a partly cloudy sky.

During our wakeful hours we had talked a lot about our plan to capture the outlaws. It seemed to be a terribly risky venture, and I told Hannah that she had better keep out of it; that we should take her home, and get Uncle John, and maybe one or two other men to go on with us to the Conaro Creek cave.

"Yes, I see you going there after mother and Uncle John learn about this!" she exclaimed. "And as to myself, have n't I my automatic and can't I shoot it? I am going to that old cave with you!"

Well, that settled it. I told her that she should go with us. And then, when morning came and the sun shone and all was bright and clear, I thought our plan not near so desperate as it had seemed in the dark night. In fact, not at all desperate: we could certainly take care of ourselves.

Catching the Firebugs

We had more broiled meat and corn cake for breakfast; then washed the dishes, swept out the cabin, locked the door, and sat on the porch waiting for our friends to appear. They soon came up from their camp, each one with his little pack, and we all went up on to the summit, and along it to the north end of the mountain. As we were passing the cave hole, the old men called a halt, and White Deer told our young friend that he had a few words for us:

“You two of good heart,” he said, “although this place is nothing to you, it is very sacred to us, as you have learned. You have seen what a very powerful place it is: that here, through our prayers and offerings to Rain God, we have brought rain, heavy rain, and saved our plantings out there in the desert. So, to us this kiva here in the mountain is a very sacred place. As we found it so have we left it, putting back into the passage the broken roof rock just as Rain God dropped it there. And now we ask you not to remove that rock, not to go into that place, lest by doing so you make our god angry with us, and with you, too. He might make

In the Great Apache Forest

you prisoners there, as he did the Apache, whose bones we found."

"We shall do as you ask," I promptly answered.

"Yes. Of course we shall!" said Hannah.

And then how the old men smiled as they one by one shook hands with us.

We went on to the end of the mountain and looked off at the forest and the great desert beyond. The black burnings were dead; not a wisp of smoke was rising from them. Away to the north the Hopi buttes were hidden in a great cloud bank, and nearer cloud masses were dropping rain. The old men clapped their hands and pointed off to it, talking excitedly, and our friend told us that they were saying that Rain God was very good to them; that he was continuing to soak their gardens.

Pointing then to a little lake to the northwest, and almost at the edge of the timber, White Deer asked me if it was not the head of the creek of the great cave? I answered that it was.

"And just a little way from the lake the creek drops down a very steep and rocky slope, then runs

Catching the Firebugs

through a narrow slope of timber, and then over the three ledges and out into the desert. Am I not right?"

"It runs just as you say it does," I told him.

"You see how we of the kivas keep knowledge of places: none of us have ever been to that creek, nor our fathers nor grandfathers, yet we know it as well as though we had been along it many times!" he said.

He pointed to a large, shining lake midway between us and Conaro Lake. "But I do not understand about that water," he went on. "Our description of this Rain God garden makes no mention of it. It can't be that it is the gathering of last night's rain."

"It is n't," I told him. "White men who live away down the river built a dam there, and so made the lake. When they need water for their plantings they let the water run down into the river, and from it into their ditches."

"Ah! That explains it!" he exclaimed, clapping hands together with a loud smack. And then, sadly:

In the Great Apache Forest

“Our people once had ditches; water in plenty for their large gardens!”

We planned our route to Conaro Lake: Down the long ridge running from the mountain almost to the big prairie in which is the reservoir; past its south side and again into the timber and straight on to our destination. Our young friend said that I must kill a duck for him at the reservoir, so that he could have some feathering for his arrows.

The end of the mountain was so abrupt that we did not dare try to go down it; we turned down the west slope almost to the timber, and then went on around to the ridge. It was bare for nearly a half-mile, and the soft ground was all cut up with deer tracks, nearly washed out by the rain. As soon as we entered the timber we had hard going; wind-falls that were breast-high tangles of logs and branches, one after another for all of two miles, down to the lower edge of the spruce belt. We then had fine footing down through the open pine and fir timber to the prairie, which we struck at noon. We went straight out across it to the reservoir, and

Catching the Firebugs

found it covered with ducks of all kinds, old and young. I shot a drake mallard, and our young friend waded out for it, and, stripping some of the larger wing feathers, began work on his arrows. The old men opened their sacks, produced some roasted meat, and we had lunch. Our young friend finished feathering his arrows, and, gathering and tightly binding a wad of grass about a foot in diameter, set it on top of a bush and fired three arrows at it from a distance of about thirty yards: all three of them plunked into it. We thought that wonderful shooting, and said so.

“If we find those bear-hide stealers, watch what I do to them!” he grimly answered.

We were about to go on when we saw five riders come into the north edge of the prairie, pause for a moment, and then start 'loping straight toward us; and even at that distance, by the way they sat their horses, and quirted them, we knew them for what they were, Apaches.

“We must not show that we are afraid of them. We will not fear them!” our young friend exclaimed,

In the Great Apache Forest

and turned about to sit facing their approach, as did Hannah and I, she taking her automatic from its holster and concealing and holding it in a fold of her dress. Our young friend re-strung his bow, and held it and several arrows across his lap, as I did my rifle. As the riders neared us we made out that four of them wore the blue uniform of the reservation police, the other, khaki trousers and a red calico shirt, and that they were armed with Government carbines and revolvers. They rode close up in front of us, brought their horses to a quick stand and stared down at us, and we returned their stare, and outstared them. Even in the excitement of the moment I noticed how different they were from our kindly and intelligent featured friends. Their faces were coarse and cruel; their bodies short and heavy upon spindly bow legs; and what mean, shifty little eyes they had, sunk deep in the edge of low, retreating foreheads!

Said one of them in broken English, when, as it seemed, he could no longer endure our steady stare: "What you doin'?"

Catching the Firebugs

"You see what we are doing: resting," I answered.

"Where you come from?"

"From our place."

"Where you goin'?"

"Wherever we choose to go," I answered.

"White boy, you think you smart! What you doin' with old Hopi men — old prairie dogs?"

"Here, you, don't you call us that again!" our young friend cried, springing up and facing him menacingly.

The other did not answer. He looked shiftily at me, at Hannah, and talked with his companions. And how their language grated in our ears; how different it was from the soft, pleasant-sounding Hopi tongue. It was natural, I thought, that cruel, bloodthirsty people should have a harsh, cruel-sounding language.

Presently the Indian again turned to me: "We huntin' him set fires in timber. I guess you hims. You come 'long! I 'rest you all!"

"I guess you won't!" I told him, and pulled from

In the Great Apache Forest

my pocket my Forest Service badge. "Do you see that? I am a fireguard! That is my station, up there on that big mountain. Just you go on wherever you are going. If you want those fire-setters, I am sure that you know where to find them!"

At sight of my badge all five of the party were noticeably surprised. Again they talked together, and suddenly put quirt to their horses and started past us. The last in line was he of the khaki overalls, and as he rode past us he spit at the old Hopi men and hissed hard words. They pretended not to notice his insult.

Without once looking back at us, the Apaches went on south toward their reservation, and disappeared in the timber, but we felt quite sure that they would stop in the edge of it and watch our movements. So, instead of going on northwest, we changed our course to northeast, as though we were heading for home, for Greer. And after we had crossed the big prairie, we stopped a long time in the timber and watched for the Apaches to come back upon our trail. They did not appear, and at

Catching the Firebugs

two o'clock we circled on through the timber and then turned straight toward Conaro Lake, often pausing and watching to learn if we were being trailed. We made sure that we were free from that, but the old men were very uneasy.

Said old White Deer: "Those blue coats will tell that they have seen us, and some of their brother sneaking-killers will soon be coming after our heads!"

"Oh, I don't believe they will dare do that," I said.

"But you don't understand," he replied. "The whites are so powerful that the Apaches fear to kill one of them. They know that they can kill the poor Hopis as they do deer, and with no more fear of punishment."

It was five o'clock when we looked out upon Conaro Lake from the timber. It was black with quacking ducks; seven big turkey gobblers were chasing grasshoppers along its near, grassy shore; and at its far end a doe with two fawns was drinking. We watched them for a few minutes and then

In the Great Apache Forest

I led on, across the hundred yards or so of level timberland, and down the steep slope on the right of the creek canyon, and finally, at sundown, we crept to the edge of the timber and looked out upon the three ledges over which the creek was tumbling, a hundred yards away. Straight across from us was the big brush patch at the foot of the center ledge, it, too, about a hundred yards from the stream. The old men smiled and nodded and whispered to one another when they saw it.

And now, as we had planned to do, we lay perfectly quiet, watching the brush patch: if the outlaws were in the cave that it concealed, we felt sure that they would be coming out at dusk for a supply of wood and water. Hannah lay close to me on my right; close on my left was our young friend; and beyond him the old men all in a row, each with a little gathering of rocks in front of him. For a time, sister and I were tremendously excited; we expected every moment to see some of the bad men or all of them come out into the open. But as the day faded and none appeared, we became quiet enough; then

Catching the Firebugs

doubtful; and at last, when it was so dark that the brush patch was little more than a blur on the farther side of the creek, she whispered to me: "We have had our long tramp for nothing! Of course those firebugs are not here! Why should they be here instead of in any one of the thousand hiding-places that there are in this forest!"

And just then our young friend nudged me with his elbow, and I did the same to Hannah, and heard one of the old men give a low hiss of caution: a man was leaving the brush, was coming toward the creek! He came on swiftly, and as he neared it became more plain to us, and at last we made out that he was carrying a bucket. We saw him stoop at the edge of the creek and fill and raise it to his face and drink, and then he refilled it and went back the way he had come and was lost to us in the darkness even before he entered the brush. We had been unable to see his features, but by the way he walked and the general outline of him, Hannah and I both thought that he was the deserter, Henry King. I whispered our belief to our young friend,

In the Great Apache Forest

and he told the old men, and they all whispered together, and finally, after some talk with me, it was decided that we should sneak across to the brush patch as soon as the night became quite dark.

And now we were again tremendously excited—Hannah and I, anyhow. We wondered what was going to happen when we arrived in the brush—if we were to make a success of our undertaking, or get into terrible trouble? Yes, I'll say it: to cross to that brush patch and the cave hole in it was the last thing that we wanted to do; we wished, as we never had wished before, that we were right then safe at home! I told sister that she had best remain right where we were and wait for us to come back to her, but she refused to do that. To stay there all alone would be worse than following us, she said.

The time came for us to start. Our young friend took the lead and I fell in behind him, then Hannah, and after her the old men. We were a long time making the two hundred yards to the brush patch. At the edge of it we stood and listened, heard nothing, then little by little moved into it, and at last

Catching the Firebugs

stood before a small, black hole at the foot of the ledge. Excited and scared though I was, I almost laughed at our foolish confidence in our plan: We were to seize some big rocks quickly and block the cave entrance with them. Lo! there were no rocks, large or small, other than the great rock ledge itself!

As we stood there listening, hearing nothing, we caught the odor of smoke and knew that a fire was burning down in the cave.

Our young friend leaned over and whispered in my ear: "Will you follow me down into the hole, just a little way; far enough to see who is there—how many of them?"

"Yes. But I go first with my rifle," I answered, and told Hannah what we were to do, and he told the old men. Sister tried to prevent me going, but I loosened her grasp upon my sleeve, and the next moment was crawling slowly into the hole, the young Hopi close at my heels. For twenty-five feet or more, the passage sloped down at an angle of about thirty degrees to the floor of the cave. When

In the Great Apache Forest

halfway down it, I passed the level of the roof and saw, not far off in the intense blackness, a small fire and men sitting facing it. Three men! And to the left of the fire, leaning up against the wall of the cave, was the big bear hide, laced again into a frame of poles! All three of the men had their backs to me, and how glad I was of that. Noiselessly I began to crawl back, and the young Hopi kept out of my way. I could hear the men talking; their voices sounded deep and hollow. One of them dropped something and the echo of its fall rumbled like thunder.

At last I got back into the open. "All three are down in there! They have the big bear skin!" I whispered to Hannah. The young Hopi whispered to his old men what we had seen. Noiselessly we all drew away from the cave entrance, out from the brush patch to a safe distance, and in whispers decided upon what was to be done. Hannah was to go to the sawmill, five miles away, for help, and the Indians and I were to guard the cave entrance. I wonder how many girls there are who would have

Catching the Firebugs

had the courage to make that journey through the dark forest? She did not fear it, however, nor had I any fears for her: the bad men were in the cave; old Double Killer was dead; there were none to do her harm. She left us, and we sneaked back to the cave hole, and sat in a row in the brush, facing it. If the outlaws started to come out, we were to shout to them to go back or we would shoot; if they refused to obey, we were to do our best with rifle, and arrows, and rocks.

I thought that, having water, wood, the food and bedding that they had stolen from us, and a roof over their heads, the outlaws would not think of coming out until morning. How I hoped that they would n't! I asked myself how I could possibly have the nerve to shoot a man, outlaw though he were?

"If it comes to a show-down, I've just got to shoot, and shoot first!" I kept saying to myself.

For a time we could now and then faintly catch the odor of smoke. Time passed slowly, but at last we got no more of the smoke, and the young Hopi

In the Great Apache Forest

whispered to me that he was sure the bad men were asleep. Without doubt they were. Big, strong, grim old William Hammond would be with us when the outlaws came sneaking out of the cave hole. All would be well with us. I felt better.

It was about three o'clock in the morning when we heard, off across the creek opening, the faint click of an iron shoe upon rock; and another click, nearer, more plain. And then, in a little while, came Hannah to us, and behind her William Hammond and five of his men.

"You have n't had any trouble? The firebugs are still in there?" Hammond whispered to me.

"No, no trouble. I think they are asleep in there," I answered.

"Good! We'll wait until daylight, and then get 'em out!" He whispered to his men, and they all sat down with us, in a half-circle facing the hole.

Day was not long in coming. We were all silent, watching the hole, looking at Hammond, wondering what was his plan to capture the outlaws. We all but jumped when he suddenly roared out: "Well,

Catching the Firebugs

it is time we were callin' those sleepers in there to breakfast!" And with that, he started to go into the cave.

"You are not going in there? They will kill you!" cried one of his men.

"Not they! Nary a kill! Them kind have n't got the sand to kill a chipmunk, even! Just you watch me get 'em out of there."

In he went, crawling down the incline, and his men, the young Hopi, and I started to follow him, but he ordered us back. We stood close around the hole, listening, and soon heard him shout: "Hi, there! Henry King, you and your partners come out of that! Come out, I say, *poco pronto!*"

Then silence. We held our breath, every moment expecting to hear the boom of guns as the outlaws shot down the sawmill man.

Then again he roared: "Come out, I say. You can't get away from us! If you won't come, we'll starve you to death, in there. But you'll die from thirst before you starve!"

This time he was answered. We could not hear

In the Great Apache Forest

what it was, but afterward learned that the deserter whined: "We'll come, if you all won't shoot us."

And "Jones," as he called himself, one of the I.W.W., had blustered: "Course we'll come out! We ain't done nothin'; you ain't got anything on us!"

And then, in a moment or two, out came Hammond, and after him, "Jones," then "Smith," and last the deserter. And when he straightened up and saw Hannah and me, he started back as though he had been struck.

"That bear hide of ours that you have in there is a big one, is n't it, Henry?" I said to him.

He gave me no answer, but suddenly cried out: "Oh, God! You fellows, let me go! Let me go! I did n't want to steal anything; I could n't help it! You don't know what hell I was in. Goin' to bed to the toot of a horn! Tooted at to git up! Drillin' all day! I could n't stand it! I had to get away — make a sneak back to these here mountains —"

"My Uncle Cleveland loves these mountains,

Catching the Firebugs

too, but he is away off there in France, fighting that we may keep them!" Hannah almost shouted to him. And how she glared at him. I had never thought she could look so fierce.

And then "Jones" and "Smith" began to bluster that they had done nothing; that they would have the law on us if we did n't let them go. But suddenly King cried out: "They lie! They lie! They helped me steal the grub and the bear skin and stuff. They set the forest fires — I did n't, not one of them! I'll tell the truth, and then you'll let me go, won't you?"

How the firebugs cursed him then, until Hammond roared that if he heard another word from any of them, he would gag them all. And then, while three of his men guarded them, we all followed Hammond into the cave, and by lighting matches groped our way to the camping-place of the outlaws, and there found and lit my lamp. Other stuff was there besides mine. Other bedding, cooking-utensils, three rifles, some clothing. And, too, a beautiful, large, white prehistoric jar with

In the Great Apache Forest

rain, cloud, and lightning paintings on it in black. When the old Hopi priests saw it they made great outcry. Our young friend told us that they were saying the sacred cave of their fathers was forever desecrated.

“Why, if that is so, perhaps I may have the jar,” said Hannah.

“Of course you may. Nothing here is now of any use to us,” one answered, when he was told what she had asked.

Well, we got all the stuff out of the cave. Hammond had brought all his horses, and lent us two upon which to pack home our belongings. Away he and his men went with the outlaws, to turn them over to the sheriff, and the Hopis went home with us. And the next day they set out for their own home in a heavy rain.

Rain fell day after day, and so saturated the forest that all the fireguards were dismissed. In due time we got our rewards for the deserter, and for killing the bear, and then we sent the hide to our Hopi friend, and he sold it, as he had promised he

Catching the Firebugs

would, to a tourist for four hundred and fifty dollars, and sent us a post-office order for three hundred dollars. We then sent him his share of the rewards that we got. We have not since heard from him.

Hannah and I were witnesses at the trial of the firebugs, but Henry King gave the most damaging evidence against them before he was taken by army officials to be tried, and sentenced to Leavenworth prison. He got twenty years, and the firebugs each ten years.

One thing that we wanted to hear came out at the trial: Henry King had found the great cave four years back, by following a wounded coyote to it, and he had never told any one of his discovery. Hannah and I are planning to explore it thoroughly some day.

Well, for a Lone Boy Scout, as Uncle John and others smilingly call me, I am of the opinion that I had quite an exciting summer.

THE END

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